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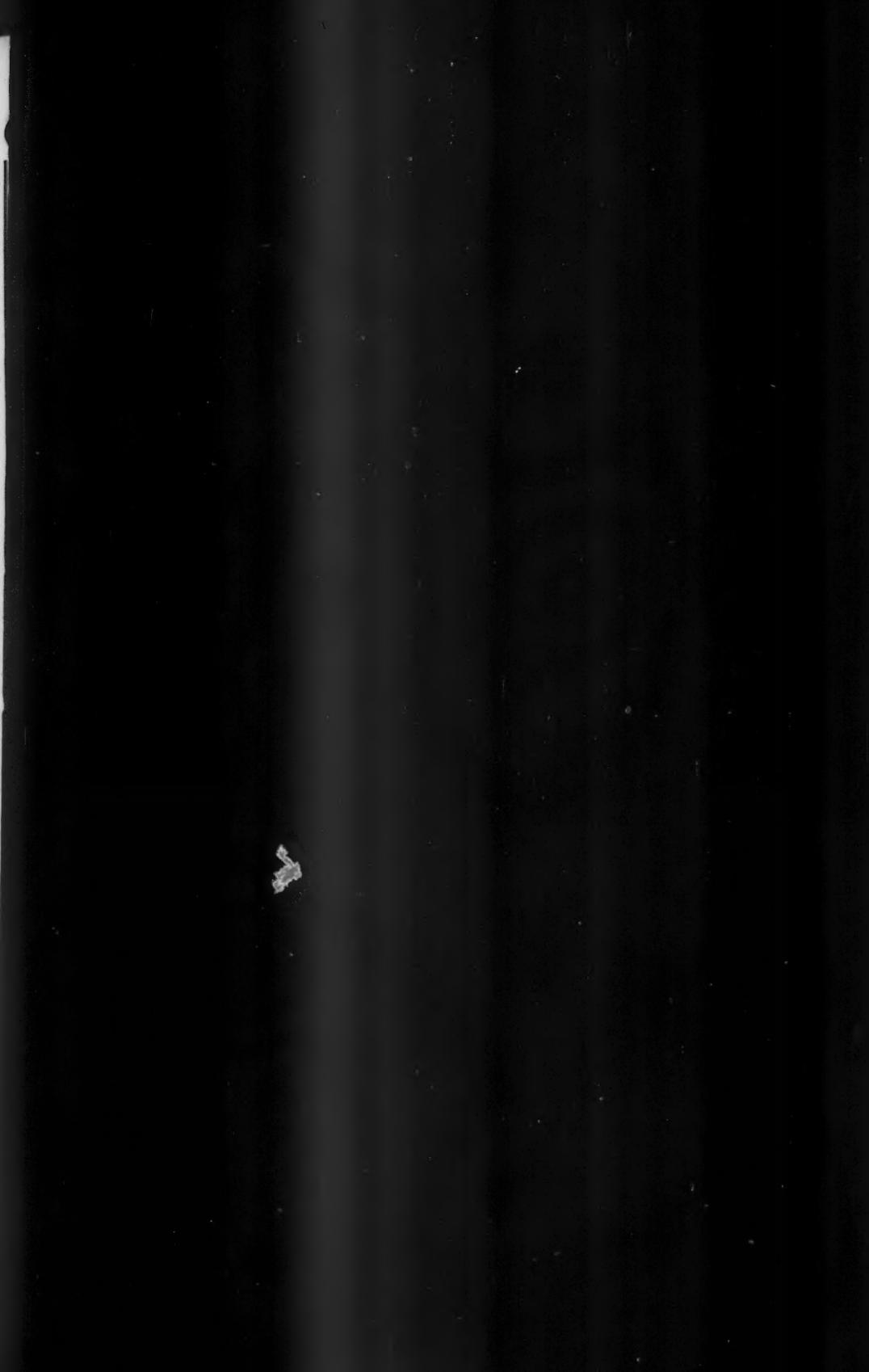
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THE MUSIC REVIEW

Edited by GEOFFREY SHARP

VOL. VIII, NO. 1

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Editorial

BRUNO Walter's recent visits to London have drawn a clear line of demarkation.

It is easy to select certain characteristics of the playing to which any competent orchestra is inspired under his direction—the overall balance of emphasis, the unerring gravitation of the romantic masterpiece towards its emotional climax and the inevitability of the subsequent descent to a normal mental clime, the warmth of the strings that others leave too cold, the tension and concentration which convince expert and tyro alike that this is music compared with which so much we hear is sham.

The Musical Quarterly has just published a tribute "To Bruno Walter on His Seventieth Birthday" from Thomas Mann in the form of a letter from which we quote:¹

What I value so highly in you, old friend, is that, having this world-favorite [musical talent] among the endowments Heaven has to bestow, you never let yourself be satisfied with it; that the high indeterminateness of the realm of tone, in which you reigned, was not everything to you, but that from early on you also longed for the honors and joys of the mind articulate, of thought, of the word, longed for human completeness, for—let us not be shy of the oldfashioned word—culture. This is not exactly taken for granted among musicians, but the greatest of them, Beethoven, movingly admonished the artist concerning this obligation when he wrote in a letter: "There is no discussion that would easily be too learned for me. Without in the least pretending to real learnedness, I have yet endeavored, from childhood up, to grasp the meaning of the wise and better men of all times. Shame to any artist who does not hold it his bounden duty to go at least thus far herein."

Shortly before the war, in a reaction against the oversentimental travesties inflicted on the patience of audiences by celebrities who should have known better, some critics maintained that all interpretation was criminal, that artists should present only the composers' intentions straight from the printed score. Fools always have blundered in where angels fear to tread, but fortunately this mania for literal translations, reminiscent of fifth form classics, has never seriously blighted music in performance—which is its only existence.

War has left its mark on performance in other ways. Principally in a decline of standards. This has been due in part to the cumulative fatigue induced by war conditions, but the major contributory factor has been the long absence of those few great international artists on whom we used to rely to stimulate our local talents and rouse our audiences to a realization that there is something immeasurably more rewarding than trying to secure a literal rendering on the basis of meagre rehearsal. That something is music itself.

Such a result must involve interpretation. It is impossible to distil the spirit of genius without bringing to the task a fund of imagination which is in

¹ P. 507, October, 1946. (G. Schirmer, Inc., New York.)

itself akin to genius. Even if musical notation were scientifically exact, the spirit of music would, in Elgar's phrase, still remain "in the air", untrapped by second-class minds congenitally unable to interpret to an audience what they do not themselves understand. Contrast Beecham's performances of Delius, Walter's Haydn, Furtwängler's Beethoven ninth, Toscanini's Verdi Requiem with any others. These are *interpretations*, pregnant with vitality, where the mere readings of X, Y and Z are as dull as ditch water.

The dead hand of mediocrity, under which our orchestras have suffered for so long, has temporarily bereft many players of their enthusiasm and therefore of their capacity for finesse, as any present-day concert shows very clearly in comparison with 1939. Many gramophone records could be adduced as proof for those whose memories are short.

What is it that divides the fine artist from the mediocrity? Re-read, if you will, the paragraph from Thomas Mann's letter. Therein lies the clue. Mann is not afraid of the old-fashioned word, culture: we are not afraid of the equally old-fashioned notion that no true artist can exist who is not also a superior individual. To brand us with priggery does not affect the fundamental truth. Psychologically, music is a powerful indicator of the personality of the composer, obviously; and also of the *performer*. A self-inflated, toad-like "interpreter" can make his own conceit resonate over and above the composer's message he feigns to interpret; an otherwise able conductor may miss the subtlety of Mozart, while lack of education, in its true sense, makes this a certainty; the amateurish dabbler, when all is spent, has taken us nowhere.

No conductor has yet been made by a college or academy of music, nor by digesting Scherchen's handbook—useful though these media may be. Careful listening to the concerts of others will help, often showing what not to do, yet occasionally providing a target to be aimed at throughout a career; wide reading of a host of subjects, and not of music alone; extensive travel outside one's native land; long association with other minds, preferably broader than one's own; all this in sum is bound to mellow and improve, but only if the subject has a true experiencing nature.

Under such as Bruno Walter, of whom there are and always will be very few, the core of our contention has been re-established in this island as an omen for the future. War weariness did not prevent him recapturing the spirit of music, nor did the players' occasional lack of subtlety obscure the meaning of the message which music, for him, has always held.

This is indeed a way of life.

GEOFFREY SHARP

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The Pursuit of Unity

BY

DAVID CHERNIAVSKY

"In my instrumental works I always keep in mind the work as a whole."—BEETHOVEN
(*From a letter to the poet, Treitschke.*)

ALTHOUGH we are inclined to pass over or merely take for granted the achievement of a real sense of unity in music, most of us would agree that coherence, nevertheless, is one of the most fundamental of all attributes underlying any great musical work. For it serves, not only as the backbone of form (and thus as the focus of proportion, of balance and tonality) but further implies oneness of style and consistency of mood and expression—and therefore true originality too. In fact, the principle of unity in diversity is so basic to the structure of any creative achievement (whether it be, for instance, in music, in the arts or philosophy) that it is hardly surprising to find it equally rooted in the form of every living organism, in fact, in the whole scheme of Nature itself.

In short, in music, this great attribute can be closely associated with that sense of beauty or significance with which a melody, a movement or a whole work is embued in its entire conception. Yet in each of these forms, the unity itself (like the sense of beauty or significance) ultimately lies beyond the perception of our rational, conscious mind; for it exists, as is self-evident, quite outside our conscious confinement within a sense of Time. This applies as much to the creation as to the appreciation or interpretation of unity in music. Thus, in those works in which the composer's efforts towards integration have been confined merely to the conscious, theoretical mind, the results usually fail to be more than superficial and obtrusive; but where the sense of unity has grown up spontaneously within the actual conception it will be found to embrace all other aspects of the work, radiating life and significance throughout the whole.

Naturally, the type of coherence that has placed the greatest strain upon the composer's powers—and often proved too vast for comprehension—has been the unity existing between the separate movements of a complete work. Here, the composer's deliberate efforts have often been added to re-enforce the natural cohesion that may, or may not, exist over so vast a field. Even as early as in certain masses of Palestrina we are faced with what appears to be a deliberate device to integrate his separate movements. Michael Haller has shown how in the *Missa Iste Confessor*, at least two thirds of the total number of measures contain references to seven motives derived from one main melody; whilst in the *Aeterna Christi Munera*, the first hymn is divided into three motives which appear in every movement, often being used symbolically in such a manner as might remind us of Wagner's use of leit-motives. This surely shows beyond doubt that Palestrina must have been fully aware of his great innovation and used the device quite intentionally; yet it is not as if he had in any way disturbed the perfect tranquillity and spontaneity of his music.

in so doing. Nor did this means of binding together the movements of a work —by the wandering of "germ motives" from one movement to another—end here. For, besides the dramatic employment of the principle by Wagner, it will also be found (admittedly, used far more spontaneously and organically) in certain works of Beethoven and Sibelius, besides finding its way into countless other major works (including symphonies of Brahms, Bruckner and Vaughan Williams).

Meanwhile, ever since the sonata became an established form, composers have at least paid attention to the tonal connection and to the sense of proportion inter-relating the separate movements, as also to the consistency of style and approach within each work as a whole. But even in sonatas of Vitali, Corelli and Tartini we find the basic principle of cyclic form already in existence. A theme may not only be transferred from its position of first subject to that of second subject, or even from one movement to another, but sometimes each of the movements might be founded on transformations of one constant theme. In this way an extraordinary homogeneity of material was gained, even if often at the expense of variety, richness and breadth of expression. Later, in sonatas and symphonies of C. P. E. Bach, in Haydn's Sonata in A maj. (no. 26) and in Mozart's Symphony in D (no. 23) movements have already begun to be linked together to form one continuous whole, while the two latter occasionally relate their Minuet thematically to its Trio.

But the real problem of establishing coherence through a complete work was not fully apparent until Beethoven began to infuse each of the movements with a strongly marked character of its own, thus inviting a real diversity and sometimes even a deep sense of contrast between their individual expression. Previously, just as there is not to be found so striking a difference between the various personalities of contemporary classical composers, between their works written in the same formal category, or even between different themes written in approximately the same tempo, so too, there cannot be found that same contrast of mood and character between the movements of each complete work. Pattern, or perfection of form—rather than mood or expression—had been the most vital element in music, and variety within pattern naturally implies a far less fundamental type of diversity than does the subsequent wider variety encompassing mood and expression.

Thus, it is not surprising to find that from the time of Beethoven onwards, composers have gradually come to realise, not only a more ambitious contrast between the characters of each movement, but also between their tonal centres (as also between the keys *within* each movement) and, at the same time, have been faced with a far more intense and deliberate effort to retain an equal sense of unity between them.

Beethoven, in his fifth and sixth Symphonies and first Rasumovsky Quartet extends the scherzo, and in his violin and "Emperor" concertos the slow movements, so that these lead naturally into their subsequent finales; whilst in his Quartet in C \sharp minor, he links together all seven movements so as to create one continuous conception. Moreover, in his sonatas opp. 13, 31 No. 3, 57, 81, 90, 106 and 110, we find "thematic germs" stealing their way

(probably often unconsciously) into more than one movement; and in his fifth and ninth Symphonies, as also in the sonatas op. 27 No. 1, op. 101 and op. 102 No. 1, themes are transferred from one movement to another in such a way as can hardly fail to be noticed consciously by the listener.

This manner of inter-relating the movements—by the definite interchange or transformation of themes—became the favourite method of later composers. Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Bruckner, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, César Franck and Elgar each contributed towards its further advance in many of their most representative works—sometimes allowing themes to return as an integral part of a later movement (as with Beethoven, or in Schubert's Trio in E \flat or in Brahms' two early piano sonatas, his violin Sonata in B major and Quartet in B \flat major), perhaps in a more organic manner (as in the cyclic form of Franck, Vincent d'Indy and Saint-Saëns or with the representative themes of Liszt), at times, more for dramatic emphasis (as with the "motto themes" of Tchaikovsky and Dvořák), or in a more associative role (as with the *idée-fixe* of Berlioz or with Richard Strauss). And contemporaneously, Schumann (in his Symphony in D minor), Mendelssohn (in his Scotch Symphony and concertos) and Liszt (in his piano sonata and concertos) were each trying to impart still greater coherence to the whole by grafting together their separate movements, Schumann and Liszt combining this fusion with complete freedom in transferring their themes (as had Schubert previously in his *Wanderer Fantasie*).

Although these methods were not always successful in their aim—since they sometimes interfered with the formal perfection of the individual movements and often were too evidently intentional and superficial rather than latent in the original conceptions—they certainly marked an important stage within the gradual comprehension of works as a whole and were undoubtedly indispensable to recent developments such as are revealed, for instance, in the modern tendency towards conceiving not only tone-poems, but sonata and symphonic works as one continuous movement (e.g. the Kammersymphonie of Schönberg, the fourth Symphony of Franz Schmidt, the third Symphony of Roy Harris, the first Symphony of Samuel Barber, Sibelius' seventh, Bloch's *Schelomo*, Bartók's third Quartet and Medtner's sonatas, op. 11, op. 25 No. 1 and op. 27).¹

But of all recent advances in the pursuit of unity probably the use of germ motives proves to be the most organic of all. No doubt, the presence of these "thematic germs" should usually be regarded as being unconscious *symptoms* of the coherence pervading the actual conception rather than as technical means deliberately employed towards that end. Certainly in the greater works of Sibelius the germ motive, or motives, which serve as nuclei for themes throughout the works, seem to find their way so naturally from one movement to another that we are left in doubt as to whether Sibelius himself was conscious of their presence. However, the composer does seem to have had this matter in mind when he relates a conversation he had had with Mahler: "When our

¹ It is significant that Wagner also should have made plans to compose a symphony in one continuous movement.

conversation touched on the essence of the symphony I said I admired its severity and style and *the profound logic that created an inner connection between all the motives*. This was the experience I had come to in composing".²

The truth seems to be that with Sibelius all technical considerations become so deeply assimilated into his musical conception before each work is even near completion that they eventually merge imperceptibly into the whole. His occasional transference of themes, for example (except in the early first Symphony) like his use of "germ motives", is so unobtrusive and organically part of the music that it never asserts itself upon the listener's mind—even if unconsciously it may re-awaken an idea from a former movement or prepare the way for a future theme. His fusion of movements, again, is never established by merely inserting an obvious link between them (as in Mendelssohn's violin Concerto) but is brought about by the natural growth of one movement gradually into the other. By the time Sibelius had reached his seventh Symphony this tendency towards ever closer unity made it unnecessary for him even to divide his work into separate movements at all. Together with his great Tone Poem, *Tapiola* (written contemporaneously, in 1925), the seventh Symphony is surely one of the broadest achievements in the pursuit of unity that has yet evolved. Moreover the perception of this vast coherence is of fundamental importance to the appreciation of works such as these; for, until it becomes apparent, the constituent parts may often seem to be empty, diffuse, inconsequential—in fact, as uncontrolled and ruthless in their growth as Nature itself might *appear* to be. Then, on further acquaintance with each work—that is, when the larger perspective begins to emerge—the tiny motives, hitherto almost meaningless in themselves, gradually assume profound significance in their interrelationship, and the seemingly endless reiterations of identical bars (as in *Tapiola*) resolve into their true focus in reaching out towards the vast dimensions of the conception as a whole.

This emphasis on Form and Unity is equally characteristic of a major part of music to-day, as revealed alike in contemporary composition, interpretation and criticism. It is difficult for us even to imagine how in recitals at Warsaw in 1830 Chopin should have divided the movements of his piano concertos over different parts of the programme. And in Paris, even under the direction of Berlioz, it was equally fashionable to intersperse the movements of Beethoven's symphonies with *bravura* songs and *divertimenti* for the horn! Yet, in general, in glancing back over the pursuit of unity up till recent time, we may notice a gradual evolution underlying its path as ever-widening spheres were to be conceived and comprehended as a whole. And now, after the endless experiments and theories of recent years, we seem to have reached, above all, a period of Synthesis, in which these new technical advances and implications can be assimilated and reborn in clearer light. Today, in fact, the twin attributes of Form and Unity are more than ever needed if these twisted paths of recent progress—together with our own personal experience—are to be co-ordinated into the art-forms of a single integrated view.

² Quoted from Karl Ekman's biography of the 'composer (the italics are mine).

Mysticism and Music

BY

MARY DANN

MYSTICISM is one of the most interesting qualities to be found in all art. It is also the most elusive.

Because it is interpreted by most as a kind of religious dogma, it is usually associated with those who have led the ascetic life. True, there is a connexion between asceticism and mysticism, but it is a less inhibiting thing than is generally supposed. Mysticism is an experience, not a creed or mode of thought. It comes as an unsought, unheralded experience bearing little relationship to time and place. It has no romantic-emotional connexion with the moment.

If understood to be a spiritual experience, then it may be defined as a flash of insight in which some ultimate truth is revealed. In this way it is possible to relate such an experience to cosmic values.

Many writers and critics have hesitated at using the word "mystic" because of the prevalent narrow interpretation put upon it; thus we encounter the phrase "quality of timelessness" as applied to the late quartets of Beethoven. What is this but another name for the fulfilment of the desire to gain insight into reality? Surely reality is the most timeless of all elements. Whether such insight is the result of experience or of intuition makes little ultimate difference.

A very old man may finally approach ultimate reality through weeding out and sloughing off ineffectual and superficial experience, or a young man may happen upon it as the result of his own particularly penetrating faculties. The name of Samuel Barber immediately comes to mind in connexion with the latter.

Art, in its universality, is probably the most adequate medium for the transmission of the mystic experience thus interpreted. And music, because it is abstract, becomes the most adequate of all the arts. Poetry, painting, and the others, dependent as they are upon a subject, do not present us with the unobscured idea. A mystical subject does not necessarily convey the impression that the work was conceived as the result of a mystic experience, a truth ably born out in such a work as Wagner's *Parsifal*.

In music the quality of mysticism is at once apparent to the sensitive ear. Let us attempt to define it in terms of technique.

Melodically, it is usually conveyed by emphasis upon the intervals of the augmented and diminished 4th and 5th, the diminished 3rd, the augmented 2nd. It may also be accomplished by false resolution: resolving a raised tone down chromatically and a lowered tone up in the same manner. The stark sound of chromatic cross-relation further heightens the effect.



Thus in contrapuntal music these means are used with the highly effective results found in the C \sharp minor Prelude of Bach from Book I: *Well-Tempered Clavichord*, and in the beautiful and moving opening of Beethoven's C \sharp minor String Quartet, Opus 131 (examples above). In each of these works the calm fluidity of the rhythm with its long overlapping phrases contributes to the very special mood of the music.

This mood is unique. It contains little of the sensuous warmth of the Romantic style from which it derives. It is generally assumed that, up to a certain point, mysticism and Romanticism go hand in hand. This is undoubtedly true in the sense that the personality of the artist is bound up with his creation. Albert Edward Bailey, noted art critic, has drawn a distinction here well worth quoting:

"Like mysticism, it (Romanticism) is realized in the realm of feeling, including whatever experiences are spontaneous, original, creative, untrammeled by rules or precedent; it seeks an escape from the sordidness and drabness of life into a nobler world where our ideals of goodness and truth and beauty are realized. If this characterization is correct, Romanticism will be seen to include some of the qualities of mysticism; but the aim of Romanticism is to construct new patterns of life by way of the imagination, while the aim of mysticism is to gain intuitional insight into reality".

In other words, not to imagine what is not there, but to uncover and disclose what has hitherto been unrecognized though always present.

This does not mean that emotion has been smothered, but rather that it has undergone a purifying process divesting it of the usual life-associations of Romanticism. There is always present a starkness—ascetic in a way—never intellectual but directed toward the higher sense faculties, the often dormant clairvoyant side of man's nature. Hence its understanding audience is necessarily restricted.

Harmonically the explanation is much simpler. It amounts to a technique having contrapuntal tendencies in which a given pair of harmonies bear to each other the most oblique relationship possible. The following chord progressions will easily illustrate this:



It will be observed from the above that the root of the second chord in each case is harmonically far-removed from the root of the C major chord. Further, that there is constant contrast between major and minor harmony.

Harmonically, this may be accepted as the basis for all that we identify as a mystic "technique". The enlargement of the harmonic scheme to include 7th and 9th chords and complex non-harmonic tones does not fundamentally alter the triad-relationship of these chords.

For any major chord chosen there are four harmonies bearing to it this identical oblique relationship:



The following principles may be deduced from this system: first, that major and minor harmony are contrasted; second, that there are no common tones between the two chords, and more, that there are few or no tones in common between the two scales upon which these chords are built; third, that frequently in orchestral music, enharmonic relationships are emphasized, thus furnishing even greater contrast through a complete shift of tonal colour:



and finally, that the augmented 4th or its inversion appears between three out of four of the pairs.

One further fact is worth noting: there exists a strong relationship between the mystic idea and the key of C \sharp minor. Bach, Beethoven, Sibelius and Rachmaninov have frequently employed this key for mystic purposes.

In conclusion then, it may be said that the aim of the style is to furnish the greatest and most unexpected contrast available from our combined diatonic and twelve-tone scale. Without this contrast, the element of mysticism is not at all evident. The music appears to possess a dimensional quality. Like Alice's Looking Glass, the listener may figuratively "step through" it into the third dimension, so transparent is its texture.

There are several outstanding and well-known works which furnish the final evidence establishing such a system: *e.g.* the prelude of Bach previously mentioned, portions of the first movement of Beethoven's ninth Symphony, the entire fourth Symphony of Sibelius (based entirely upon the augmented 4th), Elgar's oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*, and some of Rachmaninov.

There are probably as many kinds of mysticism as there are races and creeds, and to quote a single artistic example as epitomizing the idea would not be possible. The ramifications of the twelve tone scale are bound to touch upon many of the salient features of the style, but this does not make

mystics of Schönberg, Bartók or Kodály. Nor does the fact that Scriabin chose to call himself a mystic necessarily cement his relationship to the Beethoven of the late quartets. That Scriabin's music does contain the elements of a mystic style is undeniable, but his search for a kind of super-ecstatic state through recourse to Brahmanistic practices is worlds removed from the naïvely spiritualistic Franck who never in his most exalted moments would have been given to connecting the "seance" method with his inner life.

Nor does the sensuous, romantic music of Wagner bear much relationship to the Opus 131 of Beethoven from which he professes to derive his technique and musical ideal. Wagner is no mystic at all if we consider his preoccupation with but a single phase of human emotion.

And by the same token, the catchy harmony of Franck does not impress one as being particularly basic or elemental. Thus Beethoven is set up as the arbitrary pattern and example; the undeniable perfection of his late works has maintained a standard to which many composers have aspired, but few if any have attained. It is the universal yet wholly vital character of these works which found itself so completely at odds with the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century.

Franck's music, equipped as it is with all the veiled trappings of mysticism, yet manages to leave the listener with an earthy taste in his mouth. The deep purple hue of his chromatic harmony, the regular and short rhythmic pulse, the restless and constantly moving parts—all provide a negation of the essence of mysticism which in itself implies a serenity and the spiritual transfiguration of a moment temporarily suspended in eternity.

Scriabin's attempt to capture the mystic idea in his *Poem of Ecstasy* (based upon the augmented 4th) failed because he was more of a fanatic than a mystic. Liszt, Wagner, Strauss, all have experimented with the idea but always for programmatic purposes. Again the essence of the idea eluded them because they used it as a means to an end.

It is apparent from a study of the works of these and other composers that those who strove most consciously for expression in this field were ultimately the least successful in conveying it to the listener. It is wholly conceivable that music which employs these devices sparingly or not at all may be potentially more mystical than that which is confined within the boundaries of a definite and very positive style, such as that of Scriabin.

The trends of contemporary music, stemming as they do from two main sources—contrapuntal dissonance and sixteenth century modality—have temporarily eclipsed the mystic idea which occasionally comes to the surface in other fields of artistic endeavour. (I am here reminded particularly of the works of Izak Dinesen, the contemporary Danish writer.) We are still recovering from the flood of so-called "realism" and dehydrated emotion resulting from the first World War. It is inevitable that eventually certain of our contemporary composers will begin to express something of the second War's effect upon so many of our men. Samuel Barber has already anticipated this: a clarity of understanding gleaned in the stratosphere of experience.

Beethoven's Quartet in B flat, Op. 130

An Analysis

BY

DONALD W. MACARDLE

FIRST MOVEMENT

Of Beethoven's sixteen quartets (not counting the *Grosse Fugue*), five open with slow introductions, and each of these introductions fulfills a different purpose. The opening of Op. 59 No. 3 is the only one which, presenting no thematic material, serves merely to establish a mood. The first four hesitating notes of the *Poco adagio* of Op. 74, based on the dominant seventh chord of A flat, are in this introduction transformed into the vigorous, forthright motif on the tonic chord of E flat which opens the *Allegro*. The six *Maestoso* measures of Op. 127 reappear twice as interludes, each time with increased fullness and majesty. The *Assai sostenuto* of Op. 132, only eight measures long, presents a four-note motif which permeates the entire movement as a unifying influence rather than as a theme.

The brief *Adagio ma non troppo* which opens the Quartet in B flat, Opus 130 consists of two melodic fragments. The First Theme of the Introduction (Intro. I) (A) is presented only once, and is immediately followed by the Second Theme (Intro. II) (B) in Vcl, then Vln II, and finally Vln I. As will

Beethoven Op.130 First movement

Intro. I

Adagio, ma non troppo

A

Vln. I *p*

B

Intro. II

Vcl. *p*

be seen, each of these themes bears a germinal relationship to material to be used in the *Allegro*. Moreover, the cadence which closes Intro. I, as simple and elementary as any V₇-I progression could well be, manifests an incredible individuality in becoming the motif which unifies the entire Development.

After the presentation of Intro. II, a half-cadence leads to four measures of *Allegro* in which the Principal Theme of the movement (I) (C) is stated.

This theme is really in two parts which are presented simultaneously: the semiquaver figure in Vln I (IA) and the rhythmic motif in Vln II (IB). The *Adagio* returns for a single restatement of Intro. I, in F instead of B flat and

divided between Vcl and Vla, and the Exposition opens with a restatement of I, this time in F, but returning to B flat (m. 31) with IB in Vcl against the scurrying semiquavers of IA in the other three instruments.

In the next eighteen measures (m. 35-52), which serve as a transition to the Second Theme Group, four thematic ideas are apparent (*D*, *E*, *F*, *G*). It will be noted that the rhythmic plan of Sub A  has already been encountered in Intro. II.

D [37] Sub A 

E [41] Sub B 

F [45] Sub C 

G [49] Sub D 

The Second Theme Group, in deviation from the classical rule, appears in the flattened submediant (B flat to G flat) instead of the dominant (B flat to F) (*H, I*). The semiquaver group on the up-beat of each of the two measures of the Vcl introduction of IIA is in its resemblance to IA another example of the subtlety with which Beethoven attains a sense of unity in his thematic material. Even more striking is the fact that IIA appears note for note in Intro. I (*J*).

H 63 IIA *sotto voce* Vln. I

Vel. *grave bassi* *p*

I 63 IIB Vln. I *pp ben marc.*

J IIA

Intro. I transposed up a minor third *grave*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

The passage (m. 71-89) which follows the statement of IIB is an interlude such as might be expected (on a smaller scale) between the appearances of the subject in a fugue or perhaps between the first and second themes of a sonata-allegro exposition. The flowing semiquavers of IA are almost never absent; melodic fragments appear, though not with the definiteness of a new theme. The music rises to a climax and at once subsides in a bridge passage (m. 90-93) in open octaves, leading to a repetition of the Exposition or (*seconda volta*) to the Development. It might be noted that this is the only instance in the last six quartets of a repeated Exposition in a first movement,¹ while only one of the first ten (Op. 59 No. 1) is without a repeat.

The Development opens with Intro. I, each phrase being followed by a measure hinting at the two parts of I. The two chords of the closing cadence of Intro. I form themselves into a rocking motif (X) which is heard without cessation through the remainder of the short Development. A new melody (Y), similar in outline to IIA² but much more buoyant in mood, is heard in Vcl. This theme and the first measure of IB (often with four semiquavers of IA) appear alternately against the background of the rocking motif (a typical passage is shown in the example) (K) and build up to a climax which brings the Recapitulation.

IB returns in B flat in Vln I against the semiquavers of IA in the other instruments, and is repeated in E flat. The transition to the Second Theme Group is based on the same material as in the Exposition, but is a completely new statement of this material.

Note the tremendous freedom of the first 28 measures of the Recapitulation (m. 132-159). The two parts of I and the four motifs of the Subsidiary Theme Group are present, but are expanded or condensed at will. One of the chief functions of a Recapitulation is supposed to be the emphasizing of the tonic key after the harmonic freedom usually exercised in the Development. Here the situation is reversed: the Development was very conservative harmonically, but after a single recapitulatory statement of the First Theme in the tonic, the tonality wanders from B flat to E flat to E flat minor to D flat, and returns to B flat only for the final presentation of the Second Theme.

In this movement the fertility of invention more conventionally manifested in Developments and Codas bursts its bounds to make the Recapitulation—and indeed the Exposition (*vide* m. 71-89)—a field for further thematic development, especially of material not treated in the Development proper. The

¹ In the Finale of Op. 135 (Sonata-Allegro Form) the Exposition is marked for repetition.

² A leap upwards, a descending scale passage, and a rise of a third.

symmetry which is required for a simple structure—parish church or Opus 18—is not needed for a cathedral or a last-period quartet, too vast to grasp at a glance.

Note also that the further free development becomes an ordered restatement—almost a conventional recapitulation—when the Second Theme Group appears in the tonic: m. 172-211 are melodically, rhythmically and harmonically almost identical with the corresponding forty measures (m. 53-92) of the Exposition, though with an increase of contrapuntal and decorative richness that makes the restatement far from literal.

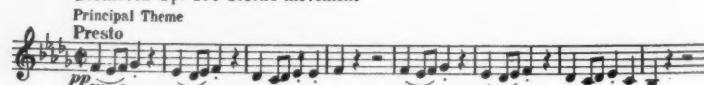
The Coda, like the Exposition and the Development, opens with alternate fragments of Intro. I and IA. It rises to a brief climax, dies away on quotations of I, and closes with three *forte* chords.

SECOND MOVEMENT

More than any other movement of the Beethoven quartets, this *Presto* stands or falls by the technique and artistry of the first violinist. For all, perhaps, except the most consummate virtuosi the tempo indication might well be *Presto possibile*—as fast as it is possible for the first violinist to play and still retain the cleanliness of execution and the lightness of touch without which the movement is as nothing.

The form of the movement is that of a *Scherzo* and *Trio*, with a bridge passage to the return of the First Section (which is written out in full) and a brief *Coda*. The First Section consists of an eight-measure phrase in B flat minor (L), which is repeated and followed by a balancing eight-measure phrase, also repeated. The Trio, in B flat major, is equally simple, and is based on a strongly-rhythmed theme in 6/4 time (M). In the return of the *Scherzo* each of the two phrases appears first in a form very similar to its original presentation and then with the ornamentation referred to above as the challenge to the first violinist which must set the *tempo* for the entire movement.

Beethoven Op. 130 Second movement
Principal Theme
Presto

L 

M 

THIRD MOVEMENT

This movement may fairly be added to the short list of non-programmatic compositions characterized by an innate spirit of humour. Here it is the humour of the drawing-room rather than of the market-place—of the eighth Symphony *Allegretto* or the Brahms B flat Quartet rather than of the eighth Symphony Finale or the *Musikalischer Spass*—and accordingly is a humour

that must be played down rather than overemphasized. Nevertheless, the twinkle in the eye and perhaps even the chuckle are present for the discerning (and delighted) listener. Present, in fact, with a preliminary bonus and an extra dividend: the descending scale passages, ending with a Bump, in the *Presto* (m. 50-63), and the turning-inside-out which the Principal Theme of the Fourth Movement receives at the onset of the *Coda* (m. 129-136) are overflows of this same spirit of glee which serves as a wonderfully appropriate interlude between the intellectual depth of the First Movement and the emotional intensity of the Fifth Movement. Superlatives can never safely be applied to any one Beethoven composition in comparison with its fellows, but a good case might be made for the contention that this quartet in its original form (with the *Grosse Fugue* in place of the present Finale) covers a wider scope, emotionally and intellectually, than any other work in all music.

From the standpoint of form, this movement may be considered as a Sonata Rondo with a Third Theme Group (technically, a sonata-allegro movement with an exposition of the form ABAC).³

Two measures of introduction (*N*) which might lead to a movement of great seriousness and depth of feeling suddenly dissolve in a perfect cadence to

Beethoven Op. 180 Third movement
Intro.
Andante con moto, ma non troppo I

disclose the First Theme, already hinted at but now announced in part by *Vla* and then in its full length by *Vln. I*. The three components of the Second Theme Group (*O*, *P*, *Q*) extend over m. 11-19 (stated, as convention would

have it, in the dominant), and the First Theme reappears (m. 20-23) in the remote⁴ keys of C and then of F. A modulation back to the dominant brings the two melodies comprising the Third Theme Group (*R*, *S*).

³ Mr. Mátyás Seiber, to whose comments on any aspect of music the author would give careful ear, sees this movement rather as a Binary Form, with the section herein referred to as the Development being instead a *Codetta* leading to the Return. He further questions the rondo character of the two principal sections, contending that what the author considers a return of the Principal Subject is no more than a bridge based upon this subject. The reader may take his choice of these two alternatives or work out a third for himself, with the confidence that Beethoven was more interested in writing music than he was in fitting notes into a scholastically correct formal outline.

⁴ Remote in relation to D flat, the tonic key of the movement.

The brief Development (only five measures long) concerns itself only with IIIB, and a subtle modification of the two introductory measures (no longer ominous, but rather in the gravely playful mood of the movement itself) brings the Recapitulation.

In the first movement of Op. 59 No. 1 the addition of a single semiquaver scale at the return of the First Theme in Vln I (at m. 261) was an example of the simple means which Beethoven could use to work a miracle of mood-lightening. Here a similar effect is attained even more casually: the change in the accompanying rhythm in Vcl from $\text{F} \text{ F} \text{ F}$ to $\text{F} \text{ F} \text{ F}$ gives a lilt to the First Theme on its return which was quite absent from its original presentation. And it certainly is not an accident that this new rhythm has already appeared in IIC.

Befitting a movement aptly described by Fiske⁵ as having "a kind of eighteenth century court atmosphere, though no one in the eighteenth century could possibly have written it", the Recapitulation approaches a note-for-note repetition of the Exposition, with allowances only for the change of tonality (and consequent change of instrumental registers) when the Second and Third Theme Groups return in the tonic instead of the dominant.

The *Coda* assumes the role so often assigned to it by Beethoven, that of a second Development, here as in many other cases more important in length and in scope than the formally-designated Development itself. A look is taken at some of the possibilities latent in the last half of I; the Introduction reappears to prove how closely akin it is to the opening notes of I; a quotation of IIIA is interrupted to show that four full measures (or for all we know, forty times four measures) could be built on the rhythm of a single quarter-measure of the theme; and the movement closes with IIIB, embroidered with scale passages.

FOURTH MOVEMENT

This movement, in Minuet Form with *Coda*, is a simple and graceful interlude between a Third Movement which, however charming, requires close attention for full appreciation of its many subtleties and a Fifth Movement of an emotional intensity which even Beethoven does not often approach.

⁵ Beethoven's Last Quartets, page 32.

The First Section is based on a theme "like a German dance".⁶ The most important parts of this little melody are the semiquaver rests: the same tune

Beethoven Op. 130 Fourth movement



with the rhythm is almost commonplace, whereas the actual notation

especially with the carefully indicated dynamic shading in the first of each pair of measures, gives a distinction and a delicacy that make the theme worthy of its place in one of the great quartets of chamber literature.

The *Trio* is based on a more sturdy theme (*V*). After two repetitions by Vln I the theme is repeated twice more by Vcl (in the key of C instead of in G), first at the bottom of its register and then at the top. A contrasting theme (*W*) is heard twice, and a brief bridge passage brings the reprise.



Throughout the *Trio* an accompaniment ripples along in semiquavers. These flowing figures continue beneath the first restatement of the Principal Theme; then the theme is repeated as a variation in this same ornamented style, with the minuet-like "danza tedesca" against a delightful cross-rhythm in the accompanying instruments.

Mention has been made of the "turning inside out" of the Principal Theme at the beginning of the *Coda*. Each instrument of the quartet, one

* It is interesting to notice that in a piano Sonata written fifteen years before (Op. 79) the opening movement is marked *Presto alla tedesca*, and the First Theme (also in G major) is for its first seven notes an inversion of the *Alla danza tedesca* of this Quartet (*T*).



by one in various registers and without accompaniment, plays a measure of the Theme in the following order:

Measure 8 7 6 5 1 2 3 4
 Vcl Vla Vln II Vln I Vln II Vln I Vla Vcl

As though puzzled by this putting-the-cart-before-the-horse, the music seems for a moment to be trying to collect its wits, makes a fresh start in the wrong key, then suddenly recovers and closes with the last half of the Theme, repeating and repeating again the final two measures as if to say, "I *was* tangled up for a moment, but here I am back in G major where I belong"!

FIFTH MOVEMENT—CAVATINA

It is not pleasant to think of a person who could not really enjoy a beautiful rose unless he knew its Latin name and just how many petals it had. Similarly, in listening to a movement about which Beethoven said, "Never have I written a melody that affected me so much", the music-lover's enjoyment cannot be dependent on the knowledge that it is in Three-Part Form, with two melodies in the First Section (X, Y) and one quite unquotable melody in the short Contrasting Section, starting like this (Z):

Beethoven Op. 130 Fifth movement
 Principal Theme
 Adagio molto espressivo
sotto voce

X

Secondary Theme
 23 Vln. II Vln. I
sotto voce

Y

Contrasting Theme
 41 Vln. I beklemmt

Z

Rather, the music must speak for itself: this it can do with a directness and an intimacy approached by few pages in all music. It is not complex, yet it can be and must be heard again and again for its true loveliness to be realized. Beethoven might well have inscribed this movement, rather than the *Missa Solemnis*, "From the heart—may it also reach the heart".

SIXTH MOVEMENT—FINALE

In this Quartet as originally written and performed, the Finale was a tremendous fugue, offering great technical difficulties to the performers and even greater difficulties of comprehension to the listeners. Upon the advice

of members of the quartet which gave the first performance, of his friends and of his publishers, Beethoven withdrew the original Finale, publishing it separately as *Gross Fugue, Op. 133*, and to replace it wrote the present Finale, the last composition which he was to complete.

The practical reasons for this change are probably as compelling today as during Beethoven's lifetime. Even with its present Finale, shorter by nearly ten minutes than the *Grosse Fugue*, this Quartet is the longest of the sixteen. Each of the movements preceding the Finale (except possibly the *Alla danza tedesca*) demands the closest attention of the listener for proper appreciation. Artistic sensitivity and realization of human limitations alike indicate a Finale which will relieve emotional tension and intellectual strain rather than build it still higher. The present Finale may not—indeed, does not—manifest itself as a climax to which all the other movements have been pointing, but it cannot fairly be held to be an unsuitable ending to a great work.

From the standpoint of form, this movement is an interesting and completely successful experiment in the use in a single movement of characteristics of both *Scherzo* form and *Sonata-Allegro* form. The first 32 measures of this Finale make up a paragraph in Ternary Form which is completely typical of the First Section of a *Scherzo*. After two measures of staccato octaves, an eight-measure tune of vigour and rhythmic variety is played by Vln I and repeated by Vln II (*Aa*). A brief contrasting phrase appears, and the Principal

Beethoven Op. 130 Sixth movement
First Theme
Allegro
Vln.
Vln. I
pp pp ten.
Aa

Theme returns; then this second part is repeated. The movement up to this point might be diagrammatically represented thus:

2 m. 8 m. 8 m. 6 m. 8 m.
Intro. || I I repeated ||: Contrast || Return of I :||

or, more simply ||: A :||: B | A :||

a formal outline which in the year 1825 might be taken almost as the trademark of the First Section of a *Minuet* or *Scherzo*.

But now we find that instead of this musical paragraph being a *Scherzo* to be followed by a *Trio*, it is instead that part of a sonata-allegro Exposition which, by establishing the tonic key, corresponds to the First Theme. A short transition passage leads to the dominant, and the succession of motifs of not very striking outline may, to meet the demands of convention, be classified as a Second Theme Group of two melodies (*Bb, Cc*), a further transition passage (of fully as much melodic individuality as either *IIA* or *IIB*), and a typical bustling Conclusion Theme (*III*) (*Dd*). A bridge passage leads to a repetition

of the material thus far presented or (*seconda volta*) presumably to the Development.

Presumably to the Development: a dozen measures based on a figure reminiscent of the First Theme lead instead to a new lyric passage: the *Trio* of our *Scherzo*! This melody (referred to for convenience as IV) (*Ee*) is in its

simplicity and lyric nature a *Trio* theme if ever there was one, and the structure of the passage from m. 109 to m. 155 is the Simple Ternary Form of scores of other *Scherzo* or Minuet *Trios*:

Trio Theme (repeated)
Contrasting Theme (repeated)
Trio Theme (repeated)

And now where? to the *da capo* repetition of the *Scherzo*? No; in this fusion of *Scherzo*-and-*Trio* with Sonata-Allegro form it is the turn of the latter to take over: we have had our Exposition, so it is time for the Development, which is introduced by the bouncing octaves first heard at the beginning of the movement. The greater part of this section is occupied by a free *fugato* treatment of the fifth measure of I (♩ ♩ ♩), but several of the other rhythmic figures of I are used—no other case comes to mind of a theme as thoroughly (and profitably) exploited for rhythmic components as is I in the Development and the *Coda* of this movement.⁷

⁷ Each of the bracketed groups shown below plays a distinctive part in the Development or the *Coda*:

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A vigorous passage in double or triple octaves, based on rhythmic figure j (see note 7) leads to the Recapitulation.

On the original appearance of I it was probably noted that the theme seemed to start in one key (C minor) but came to rest in another (B flat major).⁸ After the contrasting phrase a different modulation was used: E flat major to B flat major. Now at the opening of the Recapitulation still a third harmonic variant is found: the theme appears first in G minor modulating to E flat major and finally in the original keys of C minor and B flat major.

The entire first part of the movement (through Theme IV) is repeated with much less variation or enrichening of the voices than is customary in late Beethoven recapitulations. Theme IV reappears first in E flat, but settles down in B flat with the doubling of the melody in octaves as is used in its original statement.

The Coda is a carefree play upon almost every one of the rhythmic bits into which I can be broken, with predominant use of the first-measure rhythm

 , and works up to a brilliant close.

FORMAL ANALYSIS

FIRST MOVEMENT

Sonata-Allegro form with *Coda*, with extended Episode in place of Third Theme Group.

1-24 *Introduction (Adagio ma non troppo, 3/4).*

•••

- 1-4 Intro. I (B flat). Note kinship to theme IIA; note further that last two notes of each phrase are germ of rhythm pervading Development—motif X.
- 7ff Intro. II, canonically by Vcl, Vln II, Vln I. Rhythm later appearing in Sub A.
- 15-18 *Allegro*, Common time. Statement of IB (B flat) in Vln II against descending semiquavers of IA in Vln I.
- 20-24 *Tempo I*. Intro. I (F) divided between Vcl and Vla.

25-93 *Exposition (Allegro, common time).*

- 25-28 IB (F) in Vln I rhythmically reinforced by Vcl, against IA in Vln II, Vla.
- 29-30 Modulation on IA to B flat.
- 31-34 IB (B flat) in Vcl against IA in Vln I and inversion of IA in Vln II, Vla.
- 37-40 Sub A (B flat) first in Vln I, then with Vln II, Vla. Note rhythm previously used in Intro. II.
- 41-44 Sub B (B flat).
- 45-48 Sub C (B flat).
- 49-52 Sub D (F) Vln I, then *tutti*.
- 53-62 IIA (G flat) in Vln I after Vcl introduction. Note that IIA is taken directly from Intro. I transposed: notes 4-8, 10, 11, 14. Also note characteristic semiquavers of IA in Vcl introduction.
- 63-70 IIB (G flat).

⁸ In a similar way the First Theme of the Finale of Op. 59 No. 2 seems to vacillate between C major and E minor; the Finale of Op. 135 offers another example of this harmonic deception.

71-89 Episode on IA (G flat).
 90-93 Bridge (C flat) to repeat. Note that this is the only first movement in quartets subsequent to Op. 74 with repeat.

••

94-131 Development.

94-101 Intro. I and hints at I, modulating from G flat to D.
 102ff Genesis of rocking rhythm X which continues without cessation through Development, derived from last two notes of each phrase of Intro. I (compare last beat of m. 98 plus first two beats of m. 99 with m. 102-103).
 106-107 New motif Y, faintly resembling IIA, and appearing six times in remaining 26 measures of Development.
 101-131 Development section based on rocking rhythm X, new motif Y, and IB (sometimes appearing with four semiquavers of IA). Note lack of change of tonality unusual in a Beethoven development: after the modulation to D major in the opening measures, the only further modulations are to G major and then to G minor in preparation for the return to the tonic B flat.

132-213 Recapitulation.

132-135 IB (B flat) in Vln I against *ascending* semiquavers of IA in Vln II and Vla; Vcl almost identical with Vln I of m. 15-18.
 136-138 Modulation to E flat.
 139-142 IB (E flat) in Vcl; IA *descending* in Vln I, Vln II, Vla.
 145-146 Sub B (E flat) = m. 41-42.
 147 Hint of Sub A (E flat) based on m. 37-40.
 148-153 Sub B (E flat minor, D flat major) similar to m. 41-44.
 154-157 Sub C (D flat) = m. 45-48.
 158-159 Last half of Sub D (D flat) similar to m. 51-52, but harmonized (with melody in Vcl) instead of bare octaves in normal position.
 160-171 IIA (D flat), modulating to
 172-181 IIA (B flat) = m. 53-62.
 182-189 IIB (B flat) = m. 63-70.
 190-208 Episode on IA (B flat) = m. 71-89.
 209-213 Bridge (E flat) similar to m. 90-95.

214-234 *Coda* on Intro. I, Intro II, IA and IB. Note that rhythm of m. 223-226 is the same as that of m. 137.

SECOND MOVEMENT

Scherzo and Trio with Coda.

1-16 Scherzo (Presto, duple time).

Each of two sentences (m. 1-8, 9-16; B flat minor) repeated.

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17-47 Trio (L'istesso tempo, 6/4).

First sentence (m. 17-24, B flat major) repeated; contrasting section (m. 25-39); repetition of first sentence (m. 40-47).

••

48-63 Transition to

64-95 Repetition of Scherzo.

As before, each sentence repeated, first in form very similar to original presentation and then with somewhat more florid line.

96-105 Coda.

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THIRD MOVEMENT

Sonata-Rondo form with *Coda*, with added Third Theme Group.⁹(Andante con moto, ma non troppo (*poco scherzando*), common time.)

Exposition			Recapitulation		
Key	Measures	Section	Length	Measures	Key
—	1-2	Intro.	2	36-37	A flat
D flat	3-10	I	8	38-45	D flat
A flat	11-13	IIA	3	46-48	D flat
A flat	14-17	IIB	4	49-52	D flat
F	18-19	IIC	2	53-54	B flat ¹⁰
C, F	20-23	I	4	55-58	F, B flat
A flat	24-25	IIIA	2	59-60	D flat
A flat	26-30	IIIB	5	61-65	D flat
31-35 Development on IIIB.			66-88	<i>Coda on I, Intro., IIIA, IIIB.</i>	

FOURTH MOVEMENT

Minuet and *Trio* with *Coda*.

(Alla danza tedesca—Allegro assai, 3/8.)

1-24 First Section.



1-8 Principal Theme (G major) in Vln I.



9-24 Contrasting phrase and return; Vln I and Vln II octaves.

25-80 *Trio*.25-32 } First Theme (G major) in Vln I.
33-40 }

41-48 } Repetition (C major) in Vcl.

49-56 }

57-64 } Contrasting Theme (E minor).

65-72 }

73-80 Bridge (E minor) on modification of Contrasting Theme. Note contrapuntal play on two 2-measure fragments of this Theme:

Measure	73-74	75-76	77-78	79-80
Fragment a (Vcl, m. 59-60)	Vln I	Vcl	Vln I	Vln I
Fragment b (Vln II, m. 61-62)	Vcl	Vln I	Vln II	Vcl

81-128 *Return*.

81-88 Principal Theme.

89-96 Variation of Principal Theme in semiquavers against *double* rhythm of accompanying instruments.

97-120 Variation of Contrasting Theme and return in semiquavers (double rhythm in m. 105-108).

121-128 Principal Theme substantially as first stated.

129-150 *Coda* on Principal Theme.

⁹ As noted in the Discussion, this movement may instead be considered as in Two Part form with extended *Codetta* (m. 31-35) and *Coda*. It was also remarked that the form of each part (or of Exposition and Recapitulation) may be taken as ABC rather than as ABAC, with m. 20-23 and 55-58 considered as a Bridge on I instead of as a rondo return.

¹⁰ Note that IIC in the Exposition is in the submediant of the dominant and in the Recapitulation is in the submediant of the tonic.

FIFTH MOVEMENT

Three-Part Form with *Coda*.
(*Adagio molto espressivo*, 3/4.)

2-40 *First Section.*

1-9 } Principal Theme (E flat major).
10 ff }
23-31 } Secondary Theme (E flat major).
32-40 }

41-48 *Contrasting Section* (C flat major).49-57 *Return of Principal Theme* (E flat major).

58-66 *Coda*. Note 9-measure length (8 + 1) of Principal Theme and Secondary Theme. The extension measure is an integral part of each theme, as shown by its use (m. 9, 21, 31, 39, 57) in every appearance of either of the themes.

SIXTH MOVEMENT

Irregular Sonata-Allegro form with *Coda*. The First Theme is quite unusual as the principal subject of a sonata-allegro exposition. It is both in form and in content much more a *scherzo* subject; in keeping with this style, a section which in a similar way is a *scherzo trio* is introduced between the Exposition and the Development, and appears as an integral part of the Recapitulation.

1-96 *Exposition—First Part* (*Allegro*, 2/4).

1-10 I (C minor — B flat major) in Vln I over staccato octaves in Vla.
11-18 I in Vln II, countermelody in Vcl, octaves in Vln I, Vla.
19-32 Contrasting phrase (B flat major); return to I (E flat major — B flat major).
33-38 Bridge on I.
39-50 IIA repeated three times (F, B flat, B flat).
51-66 IIB (F).
67-78 Bridge on new material (F).
79-96 III (F).
Measures 3-96 marked for repetition.

97-159 *Exposition—Second Part* (*Quasi-Trio*).

97-108 Bridge on I.
109-116 } IV (A flat)—first section.
117-124 }
125-132 } IV—contrasting section.
133-139 }
140-147 } IV—return of first section.
148-155 }
156-159 Bridge to Development.

160-222 *Development* based entirely on rhythmic components of I.223-403 *Recapitulation.*

I enters (Vln I) in G minor modulating to E flat major (m. 223-232), then is repeated (Vcl, Vln I) in original key. Remainder of Recapitulation follows Exposition measure for measure except that (a) in transition to IIA six measures (m. 273-278) replace two measures (m. 37-38) of the Exposition, and (b) the bridge passage preceding IV is extended by four measures (m. 349-352).

404-493 *Coda* based entirely on rhythmic components of I. Note complete statement of I in its original key at m. 441-448. Could this be taken as a hint at further confusion of an already confused structural form by introducing *rondo* characteristics?

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The Symbolic Analysis of Music

BY

MICHAEL McMULLIN

I

BEFORE going into a theory of musical analysis it is important to consider what is the purpose of such analysis, and what is the function and nature of musical criticism, of which analysis is a part. In the kind of analysis that is commonly found in programme notes, the listener is informed that such is the first subject, given out in the violins, that there is an episode here which plays an important part later, a fragment there, that such is the second subject, that there is a dialogue between strings and wood-wind, and that the movement is in sonata form. This is intended to help him to appreciate the work. But some of it even the listener who knows nothing of musical technique can see for himself, and he can get a great deal of enjoyment from the music without paying any attention to the rest. He would be justified in thinking that such an analysis only disturbs his pleasure; for it presents a work, which is a living, organic and expressive whole, as a series of lifeless and unrelated fragments, strung together apparently without rhyme or reason, as though the composer had picked a few themes at random and tacked them on to one another with "bridge-passages".

It is doubtful whether the knowledge of what is the first or second subject contributes very substantially to the enjoyment of a work; but an academic dissection of form can help appreciation in so far as it places a work historically, and shows us the different forms that were used at different periods of history and how they developed. This can help to an understanding of what is expressed in the music, for the forms and styles used were appropriate to the content at each period. But an analysis should go further than this, and investigate why particular forms and styles were associated with particular periods, and what is expressed through these in individual works and how it is expressed. The interest of individual works does not lie in the extent to which they conform to a pattern, but in the conditions of the period, in how they differ from it, just as they differ in their thematic material. It is not enough to pick out the first subject, bridge-passage and second subject, but we desire to see why they are there, in what way they are related, and what is expressed as a result.

But the question of what is expressed and how it is expressed brings us from merely superficial formal analysis to æsthetic analysis, and criticism must originate here. The æsthetics of music is the study of why and by what means music produces important effects, and criticism must draw its conclusions from this. Moreover in the enjoyment of music we are aware more or less consciously of innumerable effects of suggestion and association in combination

with the emotional effect. A more conscious analysis of these will enable us to see beyond the immediate emotional effect to the higher formal and intellectual content of music, will make the difference between an agreeable sensation of something significant but indefinite, and a clear perception of what it is that is significant, when full advantage can be taken of the experience.

Music being the most abstract and instinctive of the arts, musicians are least given to theorizing, and although theories of poetry and painting have been put forward in abundance, in music such things are almost taboo. But since music is the "purest" art, and the one which can affect us the most powerfully and plays a part, in some form, in the life of almost everybody, it should be the art on which any theory of aesthetics is based. In spite of this the aesthetics have hardly been touched upon and critics are afraid of committing themselves to anything but a mathematical formal analysis which reveals no living form or sense. We find quite a different approach however in the work of Professor Arnold Schering, particularly in the posthumously published collection of essays entitled *Das Symbol in der Musik*,¹ where he opens up a line of thought of far-reaching significance.

Schering's book is a study of the associations between music and extra-musical ideas, and is based above all on the analysis of the music of Bach. That he approached the aesthetics of music through Bach is in itself important. Bach stood in the high summer of European culture, at both a central and a turning point. His is in a sense the summit of European music, the highest artistic expression of the positive and essential content of the culture. It is still classical in spirit, and is the apex of the contrapuntal technique. After Bach, who was no doubt the greatest constructive genius in music up to his time, we have the decline of the contrapuntal curve, and the beginning of the progression towards the harmonic and Romantic period. Haydn and Mozart are already autumnal and Beethoven is the dramatic and stormy genius, ushering in disruption. The aesthetic of Bach not only ceased to prevail, but was no longer understood, and his music was entirely forgotten. There followed quite different ideas on the nature of art and the function of the artist, and to-day we are still apt to be influenced by these, and to look upon all art from within our own world, as though the outlook to which we have been accustomed were absolute and pertained to all periods. The rediscovery of Bach, however, and the increasing enthusiasm for his music today, are indicative of a total change of taste, and the growth of a new aesthetic which has more in common with his methods and outlook than with much that came after him.

Approaching the study of the aesthetic methods of Bach from within his own period, Schering points out that the outlook on art was then much more matter-of-fact and rationalistic than that to which we are accustomed. The emphasis was laid, in the creation of music, on the part played by the giving of form to the idea (das Gestalten), rather than on the invention of thematic material (das Erfinden) or "inspiration". The latter was in fact systematized,²

¹ Koehler and Amelang, Leipzig, 1941.

² Cf. Joseph Schillinger's *System of Musical Composition*. (Fischer, New York). 1946. [ED.]

and was known as the "ars inveniendi", and under this heading all kinds of rationalistic theories existed for finding a system, a "spiritual magic-wand", by means of which music could provide itself with material from the outer world, and which sought after every possible way of supplying the connexion necessary for any music that aspires to be more than mere sound. Musical feeling was kindled in combination with the pictorial, the tone-symbolical in the narrowest sense, and anything resembling "pure" feeling, or a purely emotional revelling in sound, was foreign to the period. In the Romantic period the emphasis was placed on feeling, and the musical fantasy depended on the discovery of a warm and emotional theme. The idea was regarded as a "gift from Heaven", and there was no question of intellectual deliberation.

But although the Romantic idea of art does not recognize it, the question certainly exists of where music gets its material, with what it is connected and what it means. A very small amount of reflection on the process of composition makes it clear that music cannot arise out of nothing, that there must be at the start something to work on and an original stimulus to musical invention. "It needs", Schering writes, "the support of the extra-musical, and the distinction between different ages and their styles lies in this alone, that—consciously or unconsciously—this extra-musical element is sought for and found sometimes in this, sometimes in that spiritual region." He discusses the part played in Bach's vocal music by figures and tropes corresponding to those of poetry and rhetoric, by which definite visual images are evoked and used for metaphors and comparisons. These visual associations he calls "sense-pictures", and he shows the importance of a consciousness of them, touching the key to æsthetics when he introduces the word *symbol*. Seeing the history of European music as a continuous effort to give meaning to the material and technique of musical expression (*Vergeistigung der Ausdrucksmittel*), he writes "if the question be asked in what lies the giving of meaning to this material, it can be answered in a word: in its capacity to act as symbol. For since everything spiritual is by its nature abstracted from the senses, it can only be grasped indirectly: in the form of a seen or heard 'picture', which contains the 'sense' of the spiritual or intellectual. A spiritual content therefore can only be introduced into music with the help of tonal sense-pictures (*Klang-Sinnbildern*)".

He distinguishes four "grades" or planes of symbolic expression in music. The first of these is the movement of the line of sound, which, he says, "presents itself to the ear of the listener as a pure sensory phenomenon", and carries the emotional content.

His second grade is "that plastic, almost palpable pictorialism, which Bach and his age were unable to separate from the idea of emotion". To them, as distinct from the Romantics, an emotion was conceived in connexion with the imagination of "more or less concrete feeling-pictures, particularly visual pictures", which kindled the musical fantasy. The word, he says, was to Bach only significant in so far as it suggested a living act which could be visualized, and the word "beseech", for instance, never occurs in his text without a musical interpretation in terms of the wringing of hands or of

prostration. To the word "protect" musical substance is given once through reference to the idea of a steady shielding (a sustained note), another time through the idea of an active warding-off (moving, springing semi-quavers), "for wherever the text offers pictorial expressions Bach puts into them the living breath of emotion, because picture and emotional expression are for him one and the same thing". This grade also includes conventional instrumental symbolism, and the understanding of the symbolism belonging to it often depends upon familiarity with the musical idioms of the time.

In the third grade Schering includes the symbolic use of the technical means of composition, such as the canon, the ostinato, the pedal-point, and the concerto principle. The symbolic effect in concerto form of the few, or the one, opposed to the crowd, has been dilated upon by Tovey, and is a case where the entry of an extra-musical idea is admitted. A similar effect can exist in any combination of instruments, or in the contrasting of two instruments in a duet.

Tovey also refers to the association of ideas in Mozart's violin Concerto in D, in which the orchestra is without trumpets, while the first theme played by the violin is a typical trumpet fanfare. This amounts to an ironic play upon the absence of trumpets of an almost Mallarméan subtlety, and belongs perhaps to Schering's fourth grade of symbolism, which comes into being "either through the quotation of generally known melodies, or through a play upon sacred and mystical numbers, or through yet further-reaching logical combinations". In this way, by the association of particular melodies or particular instruments with certain ideas, symbolical connections can be established between one idea and another, or we can have a counterpoint of ideas. The association of particular styles with particular periods and surroundings can also be used for symbolical expression of this grade, and that such association plays a part in the appreciation of any music is implied in all programme notes, which usually begin by placing the music and the composer historically. We cannot listen to early polyphonic music, for example, without thinking of a cathedral and the cultural associations of its period, and the formal innovations of Beethoven lose their force unless we think of them historically; while all folk-music belongs definitely to certain peoples and regions and is inseparable from the poetical associations of these. It is on a symbolism of this grade that the larger forms depend, for here we are on the most intellectual plane, where there is a symbolic interaction between ideas themselves.

We have therefore a gradation of layers or planes of symbolism ranging from the plane of immediately perceptible sense-effect to the reflective and formal, and becoming more intellectual as they embrace larger and more complex rhythms. Through the intellect a higher organization becomes possible, but the same principle of symbolic effect prevails on the most highly organized as on the simplest plane, and the complex must include the simple. In a work of art we have a simultaneous symbolism on all these planes, and more or less, elements on each plane may contribute to the effect, resulting in, as Schering calls it, a "symbol-web", of organic complexity.

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II

The main idea arising out of Schering's book is that of the effect of music through sense-pictures (*Sinnbilder*), and of the conscious use of these by Bach. That music must have a "sense", and be more than the arrangement of notes in the abstract, and that its power to affect depends upon this, even if not consciously realized. This sense or significance of music is its interpretation of things, its expression of philosophic outlook or symbolic values. This does not mean that music must be an expression of arbitrary intellectual ideas, but of experienced reality; not that it must be representational, but that it produces its effects through the medium of suggestive action. Symbolism is the opposite of "realism". "A sense-relationship", he writes, ". . . is never something concluded, but instead something open, inexhaustible, of wider meaning . . ."

But if symbolism is opposed to realism, it is also opposed to the reactionary theory of "absolute" music, or "pure" forms, which, with the love of abstractions characteristic of the age, is commonly held by those who would refute realism in art, but have not thought out the question very consistently. Though the proposition of an association between music and extra-musical ideas will seem at first sight extremely controversial, and will probably be denied indignantly by many music-lovers, the latter would not, at the same time, follow up this denial to its logical conclusion and reduce their art to the status of an expressionless crossword puzzle. Rather would they be misunderstanding the idea of symbol, and confusing it with realism, or impressionism, with objective or subjective art; for it will arouse opposition from the adherents of each, being equally objective and subjective, being, in philosophy, against rationalism and irrational dogma alike, in art against romanticism, with its close successor realism, and abstract formalism.

On the other hand, in a great deal of vocal music, particularly in songs with instrumental accompaniment, the extra-musical ideas are specified by the words, and no one would deny an association between these and the music. For instance, in Schubert's song *The Trout*, the figure which persists through the pianoforte accompaniment can be associated with the idea of the fish darting through the water, or with the mood and significance of the trout suggested in the poem. Here neither the music nor the words exist in order to describe a trout, but each is suggested by the idea of the trout. In the poem the trout is used as a concrete image to call up certain ideas; in the music, the trout suggests a certain type of movement which can be associated directly with some of these ideas. If the words were now removed, the accompaniment would still be expressive as music, for the trout has become a type of musical movement that has a symbolic effect, and that might equally well have been suggested by a dragon-fly, or some other chance idea. But in this context it is emphasized by all the other ideas connected with the trout and developed coherently, so that it is particularly vivid and becomes part of a whole.

In the above example the definite image of the trout has been expressed in the general and symbolic terms of a musical figure, which has a certain

emotional effect. To describe in words the quality of this effect we should have recourse to a comparison, for instance, the swimming of a trout. From the origin of musical expression in association with words in singing, and the transference of the expression of part of the idea to instruments in accompaniment, we can see the nature of expression in all music. The general way in which a musical phrase produces an effect, and the manner of its conception, remain the same, whether in vocal or instrumental music. The power of the symbolic depends upon the expression of the general in the particular, in terms of sense- or emotional effect. The emotional line in instrumental music is undoubtedly derived from the tones and cadences used for putting expression into the voice; but an idea with which this is associated must be present, and a melodic phrase taken out of its context may become almost meaningless, though it is possible to a limited extent for an idea to be suggested by such a phrase alone. But instrumental music opens up a new world of sound-sensations and of suggestive possibilities, in melodic, rhythmic and contrapuntal movement, and above all in the new element of tone-colour, while instruments themselves are symbolic individually. Schering distinguishes four planes on which instruments are used for expression: In the first place, a large part of instrumental music is "spielerisch", an objective expression of the instrument, having, like play, no purpose beyond itself. Secondly, instruments may play a song-tune, originally associated with words, but this is not in their character, for the tune has not been conceived independently of the words, nor in terms of the particular qualities of instruments; or, thirdly, they may reproduce the expressions of poetic speech; here they must give up part of their possibilities, but this inarticulate attempt at speech, which we find in some of Beethoven's adagios, is itself symbolical. On the fourth and highest plane, however, instruments are used for their own peculiar powers, "in the service of an idea, of a relationship, not spoken, but only thought". The full possibilities for putting meaning into the medium of expression are utilized, whether in terms of separate instruments with particular capabilities and associations or in terms of their different qualities of sound, used as symbolic colours in orchestration. Instrumental music is the real sphere of the symbolical, where ideas are expressed only in their most generalized and relative aspect, purely in terms of effect felt. The particular is completely symbolized, and only here are complete sense-pictures possible.

It should now be clear that by a "sense-picture" is meant a picture in terms of general sensations, and not an objective description or representation. In a description, or analysis, we can indicate relationships but we cannot convey an actual experience, that is, a sensation in terms of rhythmic sound, colour or form. This sensation is a new experience in itself; it is not a translation of an outer experience, but an expression through such. It originates in, and must be referred to outer experience or the concrete, but not necessarily to one particular concrete. In purely instrumental music the exact origin of the idea does not matter, unless the whole organization of a work depends on the conception of a definite setting, as in a symphonic poem. The music is developed as types of symbolic effect, in the interests of a more generalized

and larger form³ and more intellectualized ideas, with the logic of "eines inneres Geschehens", according to the realities of internal experience, and the associations used may come from many different sources and may be referable to one image or another of similar effect. Coherence, or form, depends on the relationship of these associations and ideas, and its attainment requires in instrumental music a higher intellectual power and a greater and more deliberate sense of the symbolic than in setting a text, where the form and set of associations are given. A symbolic effect, since it always contains a wider meaning, is capable of interpretation in many different terms, provided that these terms stand in the right relation to one another; but it may be doubted whether the composer himself must not keep in mind a definite picture, a definite set of relationships and associations, in order to achieve an organic unity in the whole. Beethoven himself wrote: "I always have a picture in mind, according to which I work", and he thought of himself as a *tone-poet*.⁴ Such a picture would provide a consistent symbolism and a means of logical relation and development between one part and another, though at the same time the picture would be used consciously for such elements in it as served a symbolical purpose and not for its detail, as if a scene were being described for its own sake. Without a conscious method of symbolism of this sort we should be in danger either of mere description or of a meaningless succession of musical effects without any particular "raison d'être" as a whole, and this is a criticism that is frequently applicable. It is often said of a piece of music that it "does not mean anything", and this does not apply only to its emotional content, for if we are to feel sad, or excited, we have to think of something to feel sad or excited about, and there must be some further reason why we should so feel about it. The concrete image stimulates the feeling because it symbolizes certain relationships, and by attaching feeling to it we make it embody a meaning. On the other hand a theoretical "meaning" is not implied, but the active effect, by which alone the "truth" of the idea is judged. All art affects us through the senses, and therefore this meaning, or the intellectual content, can be expressed only through sense-pictures. Art is a double symbolic action, that of the direct sense-effect of the sound or other medium in the present, and the sense-effect through associations in the intellect. Its origin is imitative, and it cannot get away from the reference to some concrete idea any more than it can from the physical sense-effect of its material. The meaning, or effect, of the details must depend upon sense-relationships which can be referred to experience, and the unity of the whole depends upon the existence of a symbolic idea which embraces these.

A great composer, an artist by nature, is naturally conscious of the symbolic effect of things and of his art, while many lesser artists, and some periods of history, are distinguished by a limited or incomplete consciousness in this respect, or occasionally by a total misconception of aesthetics and the method of art. If we cannot see the universal in the particular we cannot

³ Small forms, to contain a profound symbolism within a limited scope, require the assistance of an idea already given in the words or title.

⁴ Emil Ludwig's *Beethoven, Life of a Conqueror*.

"understand" the particular, and if we do not apply this principle to art, and are not susceptible to its language, we cannot understand art. To arrive at a general principle it is necessary to set out from a particular case, and to understand a general principle it is necessary to imagine particular manifestations of it. The same applies in art, which is ultimately concerned with general principles, but which must express these through concrete embodiments.

There are some compositions in which this process is clearly illustrated in its essentials, and the symbolical use of a concrete image, specified in the title, is self-evident. These are tone-poems, of the kind that are not programme-music, and a particularly good example is Debussy's *Nocturne* for orchestra, "Nuages". Here it is necessary to think of a procession of clouds, and Debussy expresses a certain aspect of things through these, using them as symbols of the cold and impersonal universe. The music is in no way inferior from being openly concerned with clouds than if it were merely called "Nocturne", but on the contrary it is made clear that it is full of meaning. In this case the conception is concentrated around one idea, that of clouds, and depends upon the particular associations of these. If Debussy had decided to write a symphony using the same theme, he would probably have brought in many other ideas, and would not have called it "Nuages"; but the origin of the theme would have been the same. The other ideas would have had similar origins, but they would be parts of a more general idea represented by the whole. As a general principle this idea could be widely applied, and the terms in which the details are imagined would depend upon this application of the whole. The original theme, though suggested by clouds, might here be used to convey simply a feeling of height, or space, for instance, or of inexorable motion, and the endless procession of all things, without the idea of clouds in particular being developed any further than this.

It is important however to be conscious of the symbolism of all musical expression if we are not to pass over a great deal of what is contained in great works and fail to penetrate into their meaning beyond the surface. We are apt to take the form, orchestration and succession of themes for granted, and refer them to abstract patterns without thinking any further. In the finale of Sibelius' second Symphony, for example, we have the usual first and second subjects, but if we consider the movement only as an example of conventional sonata form, it is not very striking, and perhaps rather badly balanced. The first theme is reminiscent of Tchaikovsky, and we might ascribe it to the influence of that composer on Sibelius, or to flagging inspiration. It is triumphant, but flamboyant and rather commonplace. The second subject begins with a surging in the 'cellos and violas, and a strange figure appears over this in the wood-wind. This is totally different from the first subject in every possible way, and seems to have no relation to it. This strange theme is repeated many times, and eventually overwhelms everything else and virtually dominates the movement in the final climax.

If this new theme is dismissed merely as a second subject and explained on the grounds of a need for contrast, it remains meaningless. But if, nevertheless, we feel something more in the movement, if the effect of the music gives us a

vague sense of something significant, we might try to define what this is, and stop to consider a reason for the relations of these particular first and second subjects. Why, for instance, the peculiar nature of the new theme? Why does it, the second subject, grow to such importance at the end? And why the Tchaikovskian theme at the beginning?

Let us suppose that the surging figure in the 'cellos and violas is an essential part of the second subject, and not simply a "figure of accompaniment", and let us suppose that this makes one think of forests, of a kind of force suggested by the forests; or, if you like, anything to which the idea of a surging, simply, can be applied. But to imagine a surging we must think of some image, of something concrete which does surge, and here forests are suggested by association with Finland. Any such image will be symbolical, and not thought of for its own sake. We do not think of it finally as forests—it can be interpreted differently, for the *forests themselves are symbolical*. Over these a motive appears, as though arising out of them, a strange and new force, or a very old one, strong and with unescapable persistence. Mr. Cecil Gray, writing of the first symphony, points out that the principal subjects are Russian in character, while the subsidiary ones are distinctively Finnish, and suggests that the "atmosphere of storm and conflict which pervades the entire work . . . presents a symbolical picture of Finnish insurrection against Russian tyranny and oppression." The finale of the second symphony might be interpreted in the same way. The Finnish second subject is this time more insistent and inevitable, and represents a deeper force in contrast to the flamboyant triumph and outward pomp of the first theme. If we accept Mr. Gray's interpretation, this contrast of Russian and Finnish is in its turn symbolical of history. These two kinds of force, interpret them how we will, stand in a certain relationship, the whole power of which is that it is symbolic. But we must imagine them in terms of a concrete symbolic idea, otherwise they are abstract, meaningless, and not powerfully appreciable as a sense-picture.

A symbolic analysis should be designed to open out a world of relationships, and accommodate our minds to the realities of musical experience. The terms which we use will have to be as general as possible, so long as they express these relationships. But if they do not hit off exactly the right relationship, though this should always be the aim, they may nevertheless be of value in revealing a certain amount. The aim of such analysis is to make us more fully conscious of all that is contained in music, and that is very largely overlooked, in the same way that a painter reveals unsuspected aspects of things that we have under our noses every day, but do not otherwise see. The critic must search for the imagery which best expresses the conditions in the music, and he interprets the music in terms of this as the ballet-dancer interprets it in terms of figures and movements, being in this sense to a certain extent an artist. The language or imagery he uses must be regarded in the proper light, simply as convenient devices, excellently defined by J. W. Dunne:

"Analytical devices are merely instruments for rendering manifest differences and relations which, without such assistance, would remain concealed. But unless these are already there, waiting to be brought to light, the analytical device can exhibit

nothing new. It is true that such contrivances may describe phenomena in a language of their own—as the mercury column in a thermometer indicates degrees of temperature in terms of divisions of height, or as the mathematician represents variables in terms of x and y —but that does not affect the question."

It is useless therefore to say, as Mr. Heseltine did, that "Music cannot be translated into terms of anything other than itself", for this is a truism that applies to everything equally, but is not a valid reason for abolishing speech. The erroneous idea of "pure" or "abstract" music is responsible for the prevailing prejudice against any but a stereotyped academic analysis of music, and is caused by an inadequate understanding of æsthetics. In so far as it aims at refuting "programme" music, it is based upon correct judgment; but it goes to the other extreme and, in reaction against the completely objective, describes music as completely subjective, or pure abstraction. "Pure" music would be of no more value than "pure" poetry in the sense of poetry in words of no meaning. The poetry of Mallarmé was pure in the sense of dealing in pure ideas, or sensory allusions of a purely symbolic character, and to present a pure idea, such as whiteness, as a symbol of sterility or absence, he started from the imagination of a definite white object, such as the sheet of paper in front of him. Programme-music, and much more so, verse which relates a story, portrays a succession of events, not of pure ideas in a symbolic relationship. But if music contains no ideas, it is either completely physical, and therefore not an art, or it is entirely senseless.

We can greatly enjoy music without giving any thought to analysing it, and in doing so we are enjoying it on the emotional plane, in terms of its direct sense-impact. As there are planes of symbolism and rhythm, so there are planes of appreciation, and in listening to a symphony on this plane we enjoy only each part as it occurs in a general emotional line. The fact of such enjoyment invites investigation and leads, when we see the reason for it, to a much more complete enjoyment; we reach important conclusions which can be applied on higher planes, to embrace whole complex forms; and we become conscious of the symbolic significance of many details in their relations to the whole. The "Study of Symbols" embarked upon by Schering shows the way to a much more discerning and useful method of musical analysis which, in turn, affects thought in general. Our habits of intellectual abstraction cause us to overlook a great deal in all spheres of life, and in music "what we are accustomed to lose", he writes, "is sharpness of the sense for the physiological charms of music, for example for rhythms, tonal distinctions, dynamics and tone-colouring". The subjectivity which came to prevail in the "disenchanted modern world" resulted in the worship of the personality of the artist or composer, whose works were regarded primarily as individual expressions, and this saved thinking and being clear over the "causes which lead to emotion. The ability to think in symbols was lost, and was replaced by a distinctly impoverished theory of art, a one-sided teaching of feeling". This subjective shift of balance to the emotional side of music was Romanticism, a feeling for the isolated moment for its own sake, for the individual only, where a great many

of the most effective possibilities of musical expression were ignored. It coincided with the replacement of contrapuntal by harmonic thought, with the loss of form, and resulted in music of limited application and profundity, which very quickly wears out, music in two dimensions only, as it were, of which a great deal has already become dated. To-day the balance is being restored, and there is emerging in music a new sense of the strange power of the symbolical; the work of Arnold Schering is significant as the first step towards a conscious method of analysis in keeping with this.

Reviews of Music

Antony Hopkins. *A Humble Song to the Birds*. Cantata for high voice and piano (Text by Rosencreutz, transl. Frieda Harris). (Chester.) 3s. 6d.

There are four short movements, based on four verses in the text which differ in character. This is clean music. The voice part is eloquent as well as elegant, the harmonies are healthy and logical. The second piece is especially attractive, and its reappearance in the accompaniment at the end of the whole cantata is a truly poetical idea. My only objection is to the text; frankly, I cannot see why any composer should devote so much of his skill and talent to it. Tastes differ. May I venture A Humble Suggestion to the Composer: to set to music such poetry as has vitality and significance for our time, such poetry as may help us to find ourselves, and to find truth in this tremendous age of ours.

Maurice Jacobson. *Berceuse*, for viola and pianoforte. (O.U.P.) 2s. 6d.
Salcey Lawn, for violoncello and piano. (Augener.) 3s.

Neither piece makes any pretence to be anything but pleasant lyrical entertainment. Both movements are fluently written, the cello piece in particular has an attractive cantilena, and they are easy to play. These are non-dramatic and unproblematic additions to the violist's and cellist's scanty repertoire of contemporary music. When I say contemporary, this does not mean that these pretty and well-behaved trifles are anything but reserved, if not conservative, in their attitude to musical progress. They are based on Brahms and Elgar, with an occasional touch of Holst or Delius. The public will probably like them the better: they are fun to play, and they go well with pleasant company, kind thoughts, friendly weather, no politics—what more do you want?—and people will forget (for a while) those wicked, irritating moderns.

Edmund Rubbra. *Missa Cantuariensis* (The Service of the Holy Communion). The English Rites of 1662 and 1928, set to music by E. R. Op. 59. (Lengnick.)

This work (Kyrie, Responses, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, Gloria in excelsis) was written in 1945 for the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral. It is for three to eight parts, with an additional baritone solo for the Credo. The style of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century choral music is chiefly used for the building up of the counterpoint, and there is a slight colouring of romantic harmonies. The melodic idiom often wavers between the Gregorian and the pentatonic. The work is not difficult to perform.

I profoundly regret to have to report that I can find but little in the music which would appear new or inspiring.

E. H. M.

The Organ Masses of François Couperin

BY

W. H. MELLERS

As far back as the early years of the seventeenth century we can see that although the supreme figures of the early baroque organ school, Cabezón, Titelouze, Bull, Gibbons, Sweelinck and Frescobaldi, all start from the vocal conventions of sixteenth-century polyphony, nonetheless the use of a keyboard and finger technique makes possible harmonic audacities and figurative extensions within the traditional framework which the more fallible instrument of the human voice would have difficulty (notwithstanding Gesualdo) in coping with. Bull, Frescobaldi and Sweelinck exhibit this passionate humanistic intensity in harmony and baroque figuration more consistently than Gibbons, Titelouze or the earlier Cabezón; they are closer in spirit to the extraordinary humanistic genius of Monteverdi. But all the early baroque organ composers developed this kind of instrumental technique because the impulses behind them were changing; European organ music attained its crowning glory (the line is continuous from the early baroque composers to Buxtehude and Bach) when vocal music was forced to learn a new melodic technique. Though they did not know it, they were on the way to the new social hierarchy embodied in diatonic harmonic structures based on the dance, not the voice, and to new "personal" attitudes embodied in the instrumental drama of opposing key centres.

If one compares Gibbons' string fantasias with those of Purcell which are modelled on them one can observe another instance of this tendency. Gibbons' harmonies are often audacious enough; but he remains sixteenth century in approach in that he is primarily interested in the flow of his lines and regards the harmonies as the consequence (albeit not a fortuitous one) of that flow. Purcell tends to use much shorter and more easily memorable phrases, so that the grouping of his themes in sequence produces a more consciously rhetorical effect. The marvellous fourth four-part fantasia creates in its concentration on the chromatic-harmonic effect of its dissonant suspensions a much more directly personal and humanistic impression than anything in Gibbons. It might be part of one of Purcell's operas; it has even been called Wagnerian! It represents a tendency away from the balance between melodic and harmonic organization which characterizes sixteenth-century polyphony to a concentration on the poignant phrase and expressive harmony which can be given coherent structure only through some new type of organization involving the dance and the stage. Purcell did not succeed, for reasons for which he was not personally responsible, in establishing such an organization; when Couperin started writing in Paris the organization had already been developed in the classical opera of Lully. Purcell's fantasias represent the more or less unconscious emergence of impulses which the composer will spend the remainder of his short life in the attempt to subdue and organize; Couperin, starting in the hey-day of French classical civilization, can never have been in doubt as to the kind of music he wanted to write. His first important works,

the organ Masses (formerly attributed to François Couperin l'Ainé, but now definitely ascribed to Couperin le Grand), were written, like Purcell's fantasias, in the composer's twenty-second year and were likewise intended more as apprentice work than as compositions designed for the outside world. They have many elements in common with Purcell, but they have other elements which help us to understand how French music went on to produce a great classical operatic and instrumental tradition whereas, after Purcell, the English tradition withered.

Besides containing much lovely music, the two organ Masses are thus a case-book demonstrating the growth and evolution of the French classical tradition. They amalgamate, but without any suspicion of immaturity or experimentalism, a number of different tendencies. Basically there is an austere "religious" polyphonic technique which he inherited from the great Titelouze; there are passages, astonishingly Purcellian in flavour, which convey a kind of sensuous intensity through elliptical suspensions and chromaticisms in a manner that is latently dramatic, although almost mystical in its concentration; there are simple strophic tunes affiliated with the operatic aria; and there is at times an agile sense of the rhythms of the dance. Over all there is a classical poise, a concern for the symmetry and proportions of the whole, which he learned from the theatre music of Lully; and there is a combination of richness with economy in the part-writing and of extreme purity with flexibility in the melodic contour which are Couperin's own contribution and which show us already the lineaments of his mature idiom.

The form of the Masses—the *Messe Solemnelle à l'usage des paroisses* and the smaller, infinitely tender *Messe à l'usage des couvents*—is simple; a Kyrie (only in the first work on the plainsong theme), Gloria, Offertory, Benedictus (Elevation), Sanctus and Agnus, each section being followed by a number of short "couplets" headed with a clause of the Latin text. The bigger work, the *Messe Solemnelle*, is close to the old ecclesiastical conventions and contains all the real "plainsong" fantasias. Of course it is not monumental music like the tremendous hymns of Titelouze. Those one experiences as the culmination of a great religious age; their polyphonic and figurative embroideries around the plainsong stem achieve an extreme intensity and excitement, but even at their most baroque they remain cathedral music as much as the Masses and Motets of Lasso, with never a hint of theatricality. It is noteworthy, however, that although Tirelouze adheres theoretically to the scholastic basis of the church modes his concern for an effective keyboard technique constantly leads him into devices (chains of suspended sevenths for instance) which give a curiously modern tonal impression. Couperin develops this technique in a manner which is at once more delicate and more sensuous (or harmonic) in effect than Titelouze's; but it belongs, particularly in the Kyries and fugues, to the same tradition. Later, a merging of this technique with the instrumental overlappings and suspensions which he learned from his study of Italian violin sonatas, is to produce beautiful results not only in chamber works but in the most extended and important branch of his work, the church motets and elevations.

The poignantly emotional harmonic passages in the organ Masses are thus the inevitable consequence of the fluent part-writing. The end of the couplet *Et in terra pax* is a particularly moving example (almost identical with a passage in one of Purcell's fantasias), one chromatic chord resolving on to another until they sink to rest with wonderful serenity on the major triad; still more remarkable is the whole of the Benedictus Elevation from the *Messe Solemnelle*. There is nothing here which is astounding in the manner of the chromatic pieces of the contemporary organist Louis Marchand, whose suspended dissonances are so elliptical as to produce an almost *Tristanesque* dissolution of tonality paradoxically violent in its emotional effect considering the tranquillity of its dynamic range; but Couperin's idiom is as a whole more consistent and balanced. The melting quality of his harmonies is exquisitely appropriate to the tender radiance of his melodic contour, so lucidly consonant and perhaps derived, deep down, from the flavour of French folksong and its relation to the spoken language. Though the dissonances are intense there is nothing emotionally virulent about this idiom as there is about some of Sweelinck and Frescobaldi and Bull. The elegance of the early clavecinists meets the austerity and passion of the organ composers, so that the "linked sweetness" of the double suspensions is reconcilable with the sonorous simplicity of a little miracle like the couplet *Qui tollis peccata mundi* of the *Messe des couvents*. The poise of this—the combination of purity with flexibility in the line and of clarity with fluidity in the part-writing—gives the music a tender luminosity which I believe to be unique (what completely different results the simple strophic tune and diatonic harmonic period leads to in the slow airs of Handel). This music has a kind of spring-like innocence, a pure *premier matin du monde* atmosphere, which is also supremely civilized. Such a little piece as this couplet is interesting, too, in that it shows how Couperin's voluptuous delicacy which, as with Lully, is capable of a theatrical interpretation, is not irreconcilable with the religious roots of his art in sixteenth-century polyphony. Both spiritually and technically he stands half-way between the melodically (and religiously) founded Titelouze, and the harmonically (and socially) centred Rameau.

Without some such "architectural" preoccupation as to an extreme degree characterizes Rameau (and of course Handel)—the balance of harmonic clauses based on the symmetry of the dance—it would not have been possible for the chromatic-harmonic technique of emotional drama (which in the pieces of Marchand no less than in the madrigals of Gesualdo was disruptive of the old melodic conceptions of tonality rather than re-creative) to have been assimilated into a coherent theatre music. In Couperin the compromise between melodic flexibility and harmonic symmetry and order is often as subtle as in Bach, and more mature than in Purcell. Some couplets (particularly the trumpet ones such as the delightful fourth couplet of the *Gloria* of the *Messe Solemnelle*) are simply symmetrical in their dance rhythm, although their lucid harmonic periods are enlivened by contrapuntal treatment; others (for instance the beautiful eighth couplet of the same *Gloria*) achieve a wonderful poise between the calm fluidity of their part-writing, the noble melancholy of the chromaticisms

which the flexibility of the parts gives rise to, and the regularity of the underlying metrical pulse. The level flow of the rhythm and the tranquil arching of the lines "distance" the poignancy of the chromaticisms (consider the last few bars), divest them of any subjective emotionalism which would be inappropriate to a music conceived for religious ritual. In other pieces, again the symmetry of the underlying pulse is counteracted by the unmetrical evolution of the baroque ornamentation of a solo line, the ornaments playing an integral part in the moulding of the line's expressiveness (see the Benedictus Elevation of the *Messe des couvents*). In the complementary movement from the other Mass both elements—fluid chromaticisms and ornamented flexible solo parts—are combined with a regular rhythmic pulse in a manner which, half-way between the methods of the sixteenth century and eighteenth-century architectural diatonicism, reappears, with a more mature reconciliation of vocal and instrumental technique in the component lines, in the finest of Couperin's later church music, and also in many of the greatest choral preludes of Bach. This technique is significantly less used during Couperin's ostensibly Italianate period which followed the organ Masses.

The way in which these various elements can be combined in a musical-theatrical formalism capable of development on a fairly extensive scale is revealed in the two *Offertoires*—the biggest pieces in the collections—particularly the splendid one from the *Messe Solemnelle*. This piece is modelled on the Lullian operatic overture, with massive introduction embodying chains of harsh dissonant suspensions (rooted in vocal idiom but so much more aggressive in their instrumental version), a plaintive fugal middle section in the minor with even more expressive dissonant entries of the theme, and a virile, contrapuntally treated dance movement in *gigue* rhythm to conclude. The final dance movement uses clear dominant-tonic key relations, but its contrapuntal treatment of them is less architecturally formalized than the dance movement structure of the suites of Bach. The piece as a whole preserves contact with the idiom of the fantasias of Frescobaldi and Sweelinck; it lives without confusion in both a religious and operatic world.

The solution of the new formal problems which Couperin here achieves is not (nor was Lully's) a final one. In Italy the new order, and the transition from the stage to an instrumental music *per se*, lead to the fuller investigation of the implications of the new notions of key-relationships and architectural formalism, and it is this which, immediately after the organ Masses, Couperin sets himself to study in his sonatas in the Italian manner for two violins and continuo. After that, the rest of his life's work may be said to consist in the gradual re-creation of the Italian instrumental idiom in a manner consistent with his own personality and with the native traditions which are implicit in the organ Masses. The nature of the modification (it is more than *les goûts reunis*, the mating of the techniques of Lully and Corelli) can be gathered by a comparison of the first book of clavecin pieces with the fourth and last; or of one of the 1692 group of violin sonatas with the magnificent, Racinian, second suite for viols.

Opera and Concerts

The C.M.F. San Carlo Opera Company

9th SEPTEMBER; 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th and 18th OCTOBER

ALTHOUGH a great deal of adverse criticism has been levelled against this company, the fact remains that several of its members could hold their own anywhere and the general impression left by most of their performances was one of spirited endeavour, showing a ready appreciation of the latent possibilities of opera as a dramatic entertainment. This is just what British companies miss and was for this reason the more valuable.

There can be few better conductors of Italian opera than Franco Capuana who invariably combined an intimate knowledge of the music with a ready sense of effect and kept the orchestra both accurate and lively at all times. Giuseppe Antonicelli, too, achieved and maintained a remarkable tension in *La Tosca* on 12th October, spurring even the chorus to acquit themselves with credit whereas otherwise their efforts were appalling, inaccurate in rhythm, out-of-tune and with little appreciation of how to move or stand still on a stage.

Among the principals Margherita Carosio is in a class by herself. Her *Violetta* would be difficult to improve. She looks the part, moves beautifully on the stage and makes the music appear easy to sing. This *Traviata* under Capuana was a remarkable experience, but called for a far better tenor than Gustavo Gallo to make its full effect. Paolo Silveri also proved himself a first-class artist, his Figaro, Tonio and Scarpia were all masterpieces of characterization while his make-up as the chief of police was an example of an art we had thought lost to the London stage. Silveri has versatility and a fine voice, he also knows other parts besides his own as he proved by prompting colleagues who forgot. He and Carosio will soon be internationally famous, if indeed they are not already.

For the rest Carlo Tagliabue and Augusto Romani brought supreme competence to everything they did, and often a great deal more. Tagliabue's *Rigoletto* was almost as good as it used to be, while Romani showed himself to be a fine artist in *The Barber*, quite apart from the horse-play with the traditional umbrella and shovel hat. Most promising among the rest of the company were Wanda Madonna and Mario del Monaco; Madonna's Suzuki almost eclipsed Onelia Fineschi's *Butterfly* and to the small parts of Lola and Maddalena she lent a personality they do not always possess. Del Monaco's voice is small but true, he has a good stage presence and made telling figures of Canio and Cavaradossi; his future career will depend on his ability to develop his voice. Iolanda Magnoni made a magnificent *Tosca* which more than atoned for her peculiar mis-characterization of Santuzza; Francesco Albanese was a likeable Almaviva and Franco de Guerra achieved a personal triumph with a clay pipe as Alfio. It remains to mention Iginio Ricco and Aramis Titta who dealt competently with a host of minor roles.

It was unfortunate that the repertoire consisted only of familiar works. *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto*; *Butterfly*, *Bohème* and *Tosca*; *The Barber* and "Cav. and Pag.". Another year, for there must be further visits, we hope we may see some of the lesser-known operas which were staged for the forces in Italy.

Finally, a few words about the staging and production. With the exception of "Cav. and Pag." and two scenes in *Rigoletto* this was almost unbelievably bad. In *La Tosca* the unadorned roof of the cyclorama was exposed to full view from the front of the stalls, in *Rigoletto* doors came open at the wrong moment, in *La Traviata* the sun rose in a most unorthodox fashion; while strange unwanted shadows were thrown across the stage almost consistently. Then, had live ammunition been used in *La Tosca* the firing squad would have decimated itself, whatever might have happened to Cavaradossi.

There is a school of thought, if this is the right phrase, which considers the "production" of opera a silly obsession of a few cranks who are more interested in the theatrical side of the business than they are in the music. In pre-war days Glyndebourne provided the

answer, while the present Cambridge Theatre *Don Pasquale* shows how attractively opera can be presented if a little imagination be brought to bear on the production.

Let it be said that no new production of a play, or even of ballet, would be condemned to make the best of any old muck in the form of scenery, as the San Carlo Company were. It is more than time that the true dignity of opera were appreciated and that it should be staged with a proper regard for its scenic possibilities. It will not do to cry poverty, and the much publicised shortage of scenic materials is circumvented for all other stage purposes except mounting opera. Covent Garden must take far more trouble than this if it is to regain any sort of reputation as an opera house of any class at all. G. N. S.

GIGLI IN *LA BOHÈME*

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, 4th November, 1946. The C.M.F. San Carlo Opera Company; the Covent Garden Orchestra; conductor, Ugo Rapalo.

It was a memorable occasion: indeed, almost historic. One looks back at that evening as a static incident, not as one of a series of performances, not just as "Gigli again". His return after a long war-gap can never recur: nor is it likely that time will for very long leave unimpaired this magnificent vocal apparatus. At 56, Gigli's singing is mature; what it lacks of the freshness of youth is amply made up by the golden glow of the beginning of s^r There is added to perfect breath control and an unrivalled sweetness of tone a of new nobility that, this evening anyhow, transcended all the tricks. I heard sing Massenet's *Manon* with this same company in Naples some 16 months ago: he floated through that succession of love songs with magnificent ease, able always to keep his singing lyrical and yet on the right scale for a full-length opera. Exactly the same power was shown by him at Covent Garden. It is Gigli's right.

It has to be confessed that the C.M.F. San Carlo Company is not of very high standard, on the whole. There is, for example, no attempt to break away from the traditional Italian opera. Yet for all its faults this *Bohème* stood quite apart from the other recent London productions. In those one had to swallow the conventions, but in this the conventions were perfectly acceptable. The whole opera was intensely moving: it was rich, full-blooded, above all indigenous. This was not a clever and careful imitation, as so many English operatic productions are. It was the real thing, the native opera of Italy. It was, in fact, Puccini; and certain obvious minor improvements would not have made it more real. For example, Schaunard (Titta) was dull in Act I and woke up in Act II. Both Acts II and III opened badly, and even Mimi's first entrance was "muffed". Yet I look back with joy to the spirit of the whole, especially the naturalness of the singing: indeed, the singers led the orchestra along, and Rapalo had to give way. Gigli is mostly heroic, though he comes perilously near the comic at times: but his voice carries us away from the sight of his hat. Of the other singers, it was pleasing to hear his daughter carrying on a great vocal tradition. Her voice has little weight, but it is beautifully used, and though in the first two acts she was not of her father's stature, she grew to full size in the third, and gave us a quite wonderful death scene. Musetta (Huder) convinced me for once, and Marcello (Silveri) gave a really very fine performance. I carry with me still a memory of full-blooded conviction, of singers pouring out their musical souls in simple and honest belief, not only as if they had been well taught. H. J. F.

B.B.C. Concert: 27th November

LOUIS KENTNER and the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra directed by Sir Adrian Boult gave the first English performance of Bartók's third Concerto at the Albert Hall on the 27th November, 1946.

In this work most of the characteristic features of concerto design are missing. Instead of competing, the solo instrument and orchestra are rather supplementary to one another. On the technical side the virtuoso element is restrained, especially when compared with his two previous works of similar description. Except for a short passage

in the middle movement, there is no spectacular cadenza. Traditional procedure, however, is maintained in that the work consists of three movements: being in themselves of Mozartian lucidity. The work as a whole is characteristic of Bartók's last-period style where the ground-plan tends to emphasize a central movement. Quite apart from constituting the composer's musical testament, the importance of this work is increased by the fact that Bartók, in expressing the quintessence of his philosophy through it, has enlarged the expressive range of the concerto form. In the second movement the function of solo instrument and orchestra as such is abandoned and the tonal apparatus is used as a means to convey a transcendental experience.

In the first movement there are two groups of themes. The first idea in E is a beautifully proportioned line; individual, yet saturated with Hungarian elements, strikingly reminiscent of the "verbunkos" style. This peculiar flavour is carried over to the richly ornamented second group of themes. The development section, starting in A flat, is comparatively short; the first subject returns on the piano, set with particularly effective "double-stopping". At the end the piano tracery is rounded off by an engaging little woodwind figure.

The central movement, as we have said, contains Bartók's message. A mystical opening on the strings is followed by the entry of the piano enunciating a chorale in a mixture of C major and the lydian mode; the section, however, has an aeolian cadence. The embodiment of a chorale manifests a significant emotional parallel to Alban Berg's violin Concerto. The middle part of the movement consists of a fascinating section which has been described as "night-music" or "nature-music". Bartók's inquisitive mind, searching for a solution to the tragic dualism of the atavistic impulses and sublime ideals of humanity, seems to have arrived at a synthesis. The terrible struggle unfolding itself before his eyes during his last years of life only intensified his striving to achieve a balance. Religion and its established doctrines, which seemed to him to have become divorced from the needs of human life in the course of time, did not satisfy his spirit; he found his God in Nature, his peace in his pantheism. The chorale now returns in the orchestra; the piano adorns it with canonic decorations. The movement closes in a tranquil mood.

The last movement follows without a break. It is in rondo form, resembling similar designs in Beethoven's later works; with Bartók, however, the proportions of the constituent sections are of remarkable exactitude. The first fugue, in C sharp dorian, is worked out in detail. The second fugal episode, the theme of which consists of two supplementary phrases, is followed by a particularly remarkable third fugato where the inversion is coupled with the original form. The second fugal episode now returns followed by the recapitulation of the principal subject. Now the ideas are all orchestrated "in reverse", *i.e.* what was the piano part is given to the orchestra and vice-versa.

The infallible mastery of the orchestration, always pithy yet never heavy, is a noteworthy feature of the work. Kentner played the solo-part with cavalier-like ease and Sir Adrian Boult conducted the orchestra with his usual elegant precision.

Of the remaining items on the programme a polished rendering of Berlioz' overture, *The Corsair*, deserves special mention; the strings of the orchestra excelled.

Brahms' *Haydn Variations* came off less well. In our view the Brahmsian contours should not be kept in a sort of refined dynamical twilight, for it is in a set of variations that clarity of the diverse threads in the texture is most essential. This was a miscalculation which proved fatal in the Albert Hall.

On the other hand, carefully planned climaxes resulting in real fortissimos and a perfect command of the musical situation characterized Sir Adrian's reading of Sibelius' second Symphony.

J. S. W.

London Philharmonic Orchestra

THIS orchestra is making a sustained and steady attempt to regain its pre-war position and has given some performances of a high standard during the first half of the season, notably under Victor de Sabata, Bruno Walter and Eduard van Beinum. In particular

Ghedini's *Marinareca e Baccanale*, which probably only Sabata would care to undertake, was interpreted with a translucent vitality and for this reason made a telling impression where few other conductors could have created order out of chaos. But Sabata's greatest achievements were the performances, four weeks later on 20th October, of *En Saga* and the *Enigma Variations*: the latter, especially, were given with a clarity and lightness of touch which brought out a wealth of instrumental detail that seldom gets across to an audience. Sabata also took the opportunity of showing us that there are other ways of interpreting the German classics than those we have been taught by the Germans themselves or their imitators the British; that we were not convinced by his Beethoven seventh Symphony or his Brahms C minor may not weigh very heavily in the critical scale, but we do wish to put on record that without any doubt at all Sabata's reading of Elgar's *Enigma* added to the stature of this very great English composer and we hope he will accept this tribute in the spirit in which it is offered.

As orchestral trainers Sabata and Walter are poles apart. No generalisation can tell more than half the story, but we may perhaps risk the comment that Sabata tends to concentrate most on dynamics where Walter looks for lyricism, particularly in the strings. The two trends are complementary and we do not know whether to compliment Mr. Russell on his shrewdness and foresight or simply to acclaim a stroke of good fortune. Suffice it to say that Sabata and Walter between them have improved the orchestra no end.

Of Eduard van Beinum, permanent conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, one thing has to be said at once in categorical terms: that he is without question the greatest interpreter of Berlioz to have appeared in this country since the death of Sir Hamilton Harty. Of this there is no doubt. We had previously heard his version of the *Symphonie Fantastique* which set a standard, and now came the most fluorescent performance of the overture to *Benvenuto Cellini* that we could possibly have imagined. Readers who are conversant with the early French editions of this composer as contrasted with the "more respectable" Breitkopf and Härtel pastiches, will understand our meaning when we refer to the composer's volatile imagination with its alternating frenzy and calm. Van Beinum caught just this, and in so doing penetrated to the core of the greatest composer that ever sprang from French soil. Van Beinum's other performances were workmanlike and sound, but there was nothing else to approach his Berlioz—a composer who has yet to win his laurels in this country, though his greatness is plain for all to see.

Cambridge Theatre

LA TOSCA : 23rd DECEMBER, 1946

WE know of no musical venture in London which shows greater promise than the New London Opera Company at the Cambridge Theatre. If English singers are to achieve credit in Italian opera they must have the opportunity of working with Italian artists and learn from them, in so far as they are able, that opera is not just another name for oratorio sung in fancy dress. The Cambridge Theatre policy of producing *La Bohème*, *Don Pasquale*, *Tosca*, *The Barber of Seville* and later *Don Giovanni* with mixed Italian and English casting fills an urgent need, and may establish a first-class school of opera of a kind which has not previously existed in this country.

This production of *Tosca* by Mariano Stabile, with Dino Borgioli as vocal director, Alberto Erede in charge of the orchestra and *décor* by Giovanni Grandi, surpasses in some respects the brilliance of the same company's *Don Pasquale* and achieves a dramatic tension which would be out-of-place in Donizetti's masterpiece.

Most memorable were Stabile's domineering and vigorous portrayal of Scarpia which owed more to histrionic skill than sheer vocal power, Antonio Salvarezza's fine lyrical handling of the part of Cavaradossi and the high degree of precision attained by the orchestra under Erede's direction. By means of imaginative stage lighting Giovanni

Grandi did all that was possible to lend new interest to settings which in themselves showed little departure from the normal convention. Sydney Snape managed to achieve a definite characterization in the role of Angelotti, but Marguerita Grandi was less convincing as Tosca than we remember her in Verdi's *Macbeth* at Glyndebourne seven years ago. Nevertheless this is authentic Italian opera, staged in the right atmosphere (only partially contributed by the incense in Act I), with a fine regard for Puccini's dramatic sense.

Covent Garden

CARMEN: 14th JANUARY

IN our anxiety to speak well of the new company's initial production we will take the good points first. The chorus and orchestra, under the direction of Karl Rankl, maintained a high standard throughout. Then the stage lighting was appreciably better than the general level reached during the visit of the C.M.F. San Carlo Company, without managing to eliminate all of those irritating shadows which seem fated to blight every Covent Garden opera production (e.g. the high-level doorway in the tavern scene).

For the rest, the scenery and costumes (apart perhaps from Noble's) were *kitsch* and, most deplorable of all, none of the principals except Escamillo proved capable of holding the stage at any time, either by voice, personality or gesture. In a provincial theatre without operatic tradition or artistic standing, one would accept such a *Carmen* as this without comment. As the initial gambit of Covent Garden's "revival" we cannot see it as other than a disastrous omen for the future. Let us hope that with *Manon* the company will make amends.

G. N. S.

Reviews of Music

Edmund Rubbra. *Sinfonia Concertante*. Op. 38. Full score. (Boosey and Hawkes.) 30s.

Three movements: Fantasia; Saltarella; Prelude and Fugue; the last being inscribed: "In Memoriam Gustav Holst". First completed in 1936, we are now given the final revised version of the *Sinfonia* dated 1943. It is a work all British pianists ought to have in their repertory. Not unduly difficult, it yet demands from the performer considerable agility, and above all, musicianship. It is not a concerto and does not pretend to be one, but the solo part is none the less very satisfying and eminently pianistic, and Rubbra sees to it that the solo instrument is never "overlaid". Moreover, the work is compact and organised, and has an unflagging impetus that carries it along and welds it together into an organic whole, despite the contrasting character of the three movements, the first two of which have more surface brilliance and are less "introspective" than Rubbra's music generally is. But the Prelude and Fugue have perhaps the richest musical content, and are conceived in a mood of quiet gravity which is enormously impressive. I know of no other fugue which has quite the same "elegiac" quality, or the same emotional intensity; and the way it grows out of the Prelude and, when its passion is spent, is absorbed into it again, bringing the work to a quiet and intensely moving close compels one's admiration. This is music on a high level, and if Rubbra had written nothing but this *Sinfonia* it would be enough to ensure him a place among the few composers writing to-day who really count. The work plays for just under half-an-hour, so should not be difficult to fit into either broadcast or concert programmes. R. H. M.

Book Reviews

STUDIES IN MEDIAEVAL MUSIC

Das Zeremonienwerk Kaiser Konstantins und die sangbare Dichtung. By Jacques Handschin. Pp. 112. (Basle: Printed for the University.) 1942.

For thirty years H. J. W. Tillyard's excellent study, "The Acclamations of Emperors in Byzantine Ritual", published in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. XVIII, was the only source of information about the music sung at the Byzantine Court. It still remains unsurpassed as far as the music is concerned; from the literary and historical point of view, however, several studies of the texts of the Acclamations and their function in the daily life of the Emperor have added to our knowledge of the subject. Now Professor Handschin, undoubtedly the greatest authority on mediæval music, has made a careful investigation of the "Book of Ceremonies", compiled by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (944-59), and generally cited under the Latin title, *De caeremoniis aulae byzantinae*. The "Book of Ceremonies" gives detailed instructions about the acclamations which were to be sung whenever the Emperor appeared in public, either alone or with his wife, the Augusta and his family. It is therefore a most valuable source for the study of Byzantine court life and the rôle which music played in it. But since the music of the Acclamations is almost entirely lost, and in most cases only a few words of the first line of the texts were written down, many of the instructions which refer to the music and the poetry are difficult to understand. J. Handschin, helped by his knowledge of Eastern liturgy, has succeeded in solving most of the difficulties, and by elucidating many of the passages of the "Book of Ceremonies" which had hitherto remained obscure he has rendered a most valuable service to Byzantine scholars and to musicologists.

Laudes Regiae. A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediæval Ruler Worship, by Ernst H. Kantorowicz, with a Study of the Music of the *Laudes* and musical transcriptions by Manfred F. Bukofzer. Pp. xxi + 292 and xv plates. (California University Press.) 1946. \$3.00.

E. H. Kantorowicz is well known to historians for his famous book on the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, which has been translated into English. The present study, begun during his short stay in Oxford in 1934, and finished at Berkeley in 1941, deals with the Acclamations in the West, both in Liturgy and in "Ruler Worship", and so forms a complement to Handschin's study of Constantine's "Book of Ceremonies".

This is not the place to give an account of the historical and liturgical problems with which Kantorowicz deals, but I wish to express my admiration of the pioneer work which he has done in connecting studies in Mediæval History with Liturgiology, and in entrusting Manfred Bukofzer with the task of writing a chapter on the Music of the *Laudes*, which has been preserved in a number of manuscripts.

Comparing the music of the *Laudes* with that of the Litanies of the Saints Bukofzer came to the conclusion that an "artistic similarity" exists between the two forms. "Both have a tripartite main body flanked by an introductory and a closing section. Both employ the contrast of a group of soloists and the responding chorus. Both make use of the *seriatim* principle."

He rightly rejects the hypothesis of the Roman origin of the melodies, and shows by a detailed analysis of the different versions that they represent a non-Roman type to which parallels can be found in the Mozarabic, Ambrosian and Gallician forms of Plainsong. I am inclined to go a step further and to say that the music of the *Laudes* belongs to the Pre-Gregorian layer introduced into the West from Asia Minor, representing the melodies with which the population applauded Nero, Commodus and their successors. (Cf. M. P. Charlesworth, "Pietas and Victoria", *Journal of Roman Studies*, 1943.)

Sumer is icumen in, a revision. By Manfred F. Bukofzer. Pp. 40. (University of California Publications in Music.) 1944. \$0.75.

Bukofzer is right in saying that *Sumer is icumen in*, the so-called Reading Rota, "is by far the best-known and most famous example of Mediæval music". Sir Frederick Madden, Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, examined the Rota in 1862, and dated it *ca.* 1240. More than eighty years have passed since his examination. Studies in Mediæval music have made considerable progress and much new material has been discovered. In the present study Bukofzer, himself one of the leading musicologists of the younger generation, undertakes to re-examine the question of the date of the Rota. He points out that all the scholars who have dealt with the Summer Canon have drawn attention to the fact that its music is in advance of all other known music of that date. English musicians, Bukofzer writes, were slow to accept changes in notation. The Summer Canon is written in "Mensural" notation; yet no example of this kind of notation appears on the Continent before *ca.* 1280.

There is, however, another type of notation, which has been erased, but which is still visible in the MS. Wooldridge interprets this as modal notation, and declares it to be the first state of the musical text, which was, at a later date, altered into measured notation. Bukofzer argues that this view cannot be accepted (p. 88). "Anyone who is familiar with modal notation can see at once that the original version does not display the characteristic features of modal notation. In modal notation only one shape is employed for the single note—a square with (and sometimes without) stem, used without discrimination. The reconstruction of the first state leaves no room for doubt that the squares and lozenges were used with discrimination."

After analysing in detail the problems of notation, style and form, Bukofzer comes to the conclusion that the date of the Rota must be re-evaluated as a piece of 14th-century music.

From the musicological point of view Bukofzer's argument seems impeccable. Yet it has one weak point: the omission of the palæographical evidence which the text provides. In the opinion of experts on English mediæval handwriting the words of the poem, and also the note, "Hanc rotam cantare possunt quatuor socii", etc., are undoubtedly written in the ductus typical of MSS. of the mid-13th century. Even if an archaizing tendency on the part of the scribe is assumed, the text could not have been written later than *ca.* 1260. Bukofzer's attempt to assign the Summer Canon to the 14th century must, therefore, be rejected, because it is incompatible with the palæographical evidence, and we must accept the fact that the musical form of the Rota existed in England in the first half of the 13th century. The argument that no other examples of similar compositions can be found at this date is answered by competent palæographers, who are familiar with the history of libraries in this country, with the simple explanation that we must assume that they are lost, together with nearly all the other manuscripts of this flourishing period of English music.

I have found it necessary to report at some length on Bukofzer's essay because I myself was impressed by his argument and by the facts which he has assembled to support it. My first doubts about the accuracy of his conclusions were raised, however, when I came to the seventh paragraph (page 103), in which too much stress is laid on the evidence drawn from the study of the history of musical notation, and the reliability of these results is contrasted with those of "textual palæography". I cannot agree with this view. We must, I think, first examine the manuscript without bias, reserving any considerations of form and style, until the date of the handwriting is settled beyond doubt. This is a relatively easy task with English manuscripts of the 13th century, and there is no reason to question the dating of the Summer Canon by palæographers who constantly deal with manuscripts of the period. If we find that the accepted views on style and form cannot be reconciled with the palæographical date we must reconsider these views, and though the task may be hard in the present case, it should not be discouraging. It is possible, indeed, that we shall be led to more important results by the need to account

for the Rota at an early date, than we should reach if we could place it in the period to which the other known examples of the form belong.

The study of the History of Music, particularly of Mediæval music, is of a fairly recent date. We still have much to learn from the "Historical Method" which is based on very exact training in palæography and other subsidiary disciplines. We shall avoid much disappointment if we keep more closely to this approved and well tested procedure.

E. J. W.

[See also *THE MUSIC REVIEW*, Volume VI, pp. 107-9, for a review by Edward J. Dent. (ED.)]

The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600. By Willi Apel. Pp. xxvi + 474. (The Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass.) Third corrected edition. 1945. \$4.50.

The art of music differs from the plastic arts and literature in that we have only recently discovered how to preserve it; that is, how to preserve music itself. Until the past few decades we have possessed only codes of directions, varying in degree of imprecision, from which to reconstruct music. When one considers how imperfectly the notation of eighteenth-century music, both during and after the figured-bass period, represents the actual sound of eighteenth-century music and how difficult it is for us to be sure we are faithfully carrying out the eighteenth-century composer's intentions (though we can often be sure someone is not), although we are separated from the eighteenth century by no more than four or five generations of living tradition, it is not surprising that the interpretation of sixteenth-century work—to say nothing of that of the tenth—bristles with points that (in a celebrated phrase) "verge on the moot". If we cannot be absolutely sure how to perform every passage in a Mozart piano Concerto, what degree of certainty is possible in the interpretation of a Gregorian antiphon or a thirteenth-century conductus? Reviewing the first edition of Dr. Apel's book in these pages in November, 1943, Dr. Wellesz remarked that "the average reader . . . may come to the conclusion that in many points we are far from any accurate knowledge of how to render twelfth- and thirteenth-century MSS. into modern notation". It is certainly not surprising that the first edition of the present book, the first book in English to deal at length and in detail with such vexed questions, should have drawn criticism from other experts, though (as the author points out in the Preface to the second edition) "a good deal of this criticism has the character of a divergent opinion rather than of indisputable proof". (Indisputable proof would be very welcome!)

Most of the criticism was aimed at Dr. Apel's chapter on the so-called "square notation" which evolved from the neumatic notation toward the end of the twelfth century, the notation frequently used for plainsong even at the present day, particularly at the sections dealing with "syllabic notation" (in which each syllable of the text is represented musically by one group of signs) and "duplum notation" (named from the "pure" organa of the early Notre Dame School, or rather from the second part in organa), where Dr. Apel shows a certain reluctance to accept modal rhythm—in terms of a concrete example to accept



instead of



However, Apel has decided to stand his ground and a non-specialist dare only observe with interest the "divergent opinions" of doctors in disagreement. The only "indisputable proof" either way would be a thirteenth-century gramophone record.

The third edition of the book is therefore essentially identical with the first, though a number of definite errors have been corrected, and the only other postscript I am tempted to add to Dr. Wellesz' review of the first edition is a comment on his remark that one of Dr. Apel's methods "makes no easy reading". Nor does the book as a whole. But it makes very fascinating reading and it would be a pity if any intelligent musician allowed himself to be repelled from it by the difficulty of the subject or the reflection that the whole thing is the concern only of specialists. If he will only begin, he will find himself encouraged by many wayside flowers—such as the information that Bach finished the preludes of the *Orgelbüchlein* in tablature when the page of lined manuscript paper did not give enough space or the description of the comic sixteenth-century *Judentanz* in Hans Newsidler's *Newgeordnet künstlich Lautenbuch*—and he may discover that, through ignorance of a practice familiar from the fourteenth to the early eighteenth century, he has been making mistakes in *Messiah*—mistakes that Mozart made too. He will also learn the reason, in fourteenth-century notation, for the name we give that practice.

G. A.

BIOGRAPHY

Tchaikovsky. By Herbert Weinstock. Pp. 388. (Cassell.) 1946. 21s.

Tchaikovsky. Ed. Gerald Abraham. Pp. 277. (Lindsay Drummond.) 1945. 9s. 6d.

What should we expect from a biography of a genius? What we are obviously bound to get is the author's special interest in his subject—that aspect which appeals to the writer as an individual, or, alternatively, that for which he thinks the public is hankering. But for myself I want an interpretation of facts, the fundamental things in the outlook and social conduct that will explain the works of genius; where the externals are insisted upon my interest in them is merely for their exploratory features.

A biography may take several years to write and a critic, or reviewer, may, with one arrogant wave of his pen, dismiss the fruits of the author's labours in one airy phrase. But that is the penalty of such things, to be accepted with good grace when the reviewer is known to be honest. Enthusiasm and sweat count for little if not allied to fundamental knowledge and an inner psychic insight. Mere chronicles of day-to-day events in anybody's life can only be superficially interesting and may become abortive when extensively pursued.

This may be rather clumsily put but it does illustrate one objection that I have to the type of biography that is Herbert Weinstock's approach in his full length portrait of the man Tchaikovsky, of which Cassell issued the English edition early this year (I had received the American edition previously; an eloquent testimony in its paper and illustrations to the different standards of austerity enforced by the war—in this country we would regard the American publication as an edition de luxe). As I have already suggested I like a critical estimate to go hand in hand with the factual events. Weinstock does not and indicates quite frankly in the introduction that his concern is with the life alone and that any judgment of the music is only inferential. Taking the book on this basis it may be stated at once that it is probably as detailed and accurate a picture of Tchaikovsky as may ever be attained.

Weinstock pays tribute to Rosa Newmarch and Edwin Evans for their "pioneering" biographies, but points out that a mass of material has recently been made available in Russia that throws new light on Tchaikovsky's life and corrects many accidental or intentional misstatements by Modest Tchaikovsky about his brother. The work is supplemented with a bibliography in which the author cites as indispensable one work published in Russian in 1940 that has not yet attained translation.

As a minor irritation may I be permitted to expostulate against the constant reiteration of "Piotr Ilyich"—instead of the familiar Peter, which Tchaikovsky himself was content to use—and the persistent use of the characteristic secondary Russian names which, with their terminal "vich's" and "ovna's" add considerably to the number of words in the book. It is probably done purposefully to aid the West in absorbing the Russian atmosphere, but it can really mean very little to the average American or English reader.

Almost side by side with Weinstock's biography came a book which coincidence made a valuable complement and one which means more to me personally; this is the English conceived and published volume in the new "Music of the Masters" series, edited by Gerald Abraham. The form in which the book is cast is excellent—a symposium of which the editor supplies two chapters or essays—on Operas and Incidental Music and Religious and other Choral Music—and eight others are written by well-known critics and musicologists.

A brief biographical sketch from the pen of Edward Lockspeiser gives the main essentials of Tchaikovsky's life and draws a number of reasonable conclusions about the effects of his temperament and health upon his work. The Symphonies are dealt with by Martin Cooper, who is content to take the works as the composer wrote them and not as some critics think he ought to have composed them. Eric Blom devotes a large part of his essay to a dissection of the famous B flat minor with due attention to its beauties as well as its defects. Incidentally, Blom mentions the "cut" edition of the second Concerto, with the composer's consent, by Siloti; a point on which Weinstock is silent. As a matter of interest my copy of the score, the "Neue Ausgabe, revidirt und nach Angaben des Componisten gekürzt von A. Siloti", formerly belonged to Siloti himself and has some manuscript alterations further mending and rearranging the work.

Ralph W. Wood deals with the Miscellaneous Orchestral Works in an uncompromising and rather dogmatic fashion. His dissertation on Helpmann's utilization of the *Hamlet* Overture for his ballet is interesting but inferentially wrong. Both Constant Lambert and Helpmann told me that the book and choreography of the ballet were complete in all but a few minor essentials, before it was decided to use the Tchaikovsky overture. Helpmann did not know of its existence. That the two achieve a perfect marriage is a major marvel.

Colin Mason, writing of the Chamber Music, thinks that Tchaikovsky wastes the Russian folk song tune in the *Andante cantabile* of the first string quartet, but has some interesting things to say of lesser known works. Most people will know, say, an occasional piano piece of Tchaikovsky's and little more; A. E. F. Dickinson's summing up of the Piano Music seems to suggest that that is enough, although the editor has added a note calling attention to Fifty Russian Folk Songs for piano duet as charming miniatures. Gerald Abraham's contributions are as well conceived, reasoned, and scholarly as usual and add to the debt in which his brilliant editorship places us. Edwin Evans' treatment of the Ballets is too much concerned with the libretti and too little with the music, but that is frequently the case when ballet is brought under review. A consideration of the Songs comes from the Soviet critic A. Alshvng (translated by I. Freiman) and presumably forms part of a large-scale work on Tchaikovsky now in preparation. The bibliography includes much Russian material—in the pious hope that it may be useful as more people are now studying Russian—but a more generally valuable feature is the inclusion of a number of articles from the English periodical Press; stuff that is likely to be overlooked unless listed in some such way.

J. F. R.

Mussorgsky. By M. D. Calvocoressi. Pp. viii + 216. ("Master Musicians", Dent.)
1946. 6s. 6d.

There is a kind of architecture known in the United States as Hudson River Bracketed—a term employed to designate important residences built in a style which may be described as bastard and balconied baroque. This book, also, is bracketed, but its brackets are superimposed in a manner altogether unexceptionable. Each of its authors was capable of writing with full authority on its subject. Gerald Abraham, who for some

years prior to the demise of Calvocoressi was closely associated with the latter, having become aware of the existence of an incomplete manuscript of an authoritative work on the composer of *Boris Godunov*, generously offered to supply the material required to fill some very considerable *lacunae*. The source of the substance thus furnished is in each instance indicated by its enclosure within square brackets. This supplementary information is most skilfully and unobtrusively interpolated and dovetailed. Indeed, in many cases, having entered the territory of a bracket—placed as though to hint that the reader has "been warned"—one forgets, until brought up sharp by the complementary hieroglyphic, that this portion of the road is, so to speak, a by-pass. Abraham has carried out his difficult task in a manner worthy of himself. He is, in this instance, to revert to the architectural metaphor, a semi-detached author; but when required to express his own personal opinion or judgment he does so with complete detachment. Moreover, he occasionally inserts, as a supplement to the main bracketed portions, a footnote so illuminating and picturesque that he may be said to have subjected Calvocoressi to the process associated with the immortal James Granger—the said information having been obtained from valuable documents which have become available only in quite recent years. The reliability of Abraham's labours is nowhere more plainly manifested than in such instances as when, in a particularly lengthy addition, he discusses the first of a series of songs written by Mussorgsky in the peasant style—to the text of Nekrasov's *Kalistrat*—making therefrom a brief quotation: "Thou shalt live in clover". Now it would be pardonable were the casual reader, knowing something of the method of translators, to conclude that this is a somewhat rough version of the vernacular. (*Ohk, budesh zhit ti pripavayuchi.*) It is, in point of fact, the precise idiomatic equivalent of the original—as was Calvocoressi's French rendering: (*tu*) *grandiras en pâte comme un cog.* (Calvocoressi was fully justified in being proud of his mastery of gallic slang.) In such matters that "rightness" which is "all" is rarely achieved or even attempted. Abraham's unfailing accuracy is again evident when he refers to the libretto of the unfinished opera *Sorochinskaya Yama*. He quotes Karatigin's imposing article, in which the character of the swain is consistently mentioned as *parobok*, but when dealing with the young fellow in his own context he correctly terms him *parubok*—using the little-Russian word employed by Gogol himself. It is interesting to observe that the learned Russian musicologist, who complained in the above-mentioned essay that the libretto is "a rather unpleasing mixture of Great Russian and Little Russian", does not seem to have been aware that in Gogol's Complete Works there is an extensive glossary of malo-Russian words and expressions employed by the immortal author of *Dead Souls*, who wrote mainly in the conventional language.

As to the original author of this book, it had been generally anticipated by those who were grateful for the French biography published by Calvocoressi in 1911, that there would sooner or later appear an up-to-date volume containing the considerable amount of information which has come to light in the intervening years. And now, in view of the meticulously detailed analysis of Mussorgsky's personal character and creative style and manner here afforded, we feel that the "definitive work that lies in a Paris safe, awaiting the day when conditions will make its publication possible" may prove to be less authentic than the jointly compiled volume under review. Judging by the frequency with which new information on the subject of Mussorgsky and some of his associates is being discovered it seems difficult to avoid important omissions. In the earlier biography Calvocoressi mentioned the dedication of the abortive opera *The Matchmaker* to Stasov, but he was unaware that in the actual score, which was published subsequent to the completion of that book, Mussorgsky bequeathed all rights in his work to the great art critic—adding that this had been recorded "at Stasov's flat in the presence of a considerable gathering". This passage, which does not appear, even in brackets, in the new book, has been rendered memorable by a Russian writer who, in an essay describing the conditions under which various eminent composers worked, wrongly assumed that Mussorgsky had composed the entire work "in the presence of a considerable gathering", and cited this as evidence of his detachment when in the process of creation! Calvocoressi was an unusually

versatile man. The present writer has met few Britons whose acquaintance with English literature in general, and Kipling in particular, so closely approached encyclopaedic dimensions. In these pages, however, when discussing certain aspects of the musical and the plastic arts, with specific reference to realism, he appears to have gone astray. He deems it illogical to assume "that a portrait cannot be a good picture if the painter aimed at achieving a faithful likeness". The omission of the word "only" after "achieving" is conspicuous. A realistic portrait should, of course, reveal its subject's thoughts and inherent characteristics, especially those which, owing to their lack of the artist's insight and vision, the subject's so-called "familiars" have failed to perceive. And this is precisely what Mussorgsky's music did for the protagonists of his operas and many of his songs.

M. M-N.

Fauré. By Norman Suckling. Pp. viii + 229. ("Master Musicians", Dent.) 1946. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Norman Suckling is probably the most ardent of Fauré's advocates in English-speaking countries, and no one could have been better qualified to write the first extended study in English of this great French master. Fauré has been consistently underestimated on this side of the Channel, so Mr. Suckling's book is doubly welcome. He makes very large claims for Fauré's music which, on the whole, I feel are justified; only occasionally does one detect a note of special pleading and a tendency to exalt Fauré above all his contemporaries—for example, above Ravel, who is, surely, of more than "secondary" rank.

Mr. Suckling quite rightly sees Fauré as "the opposite of a Romantic", and quotes with approval Mlle. Nadia Boulanger's application to him of Maurras' remark concerning the Athenians of the age of Pericles: "Feeling was the spring of all their behaviour, and it was reason that they set upon their altar". This Hellenic attitude to art is something, it would seem (when manifested in music, at any rate) that Britons find disconcerting—largely because musical taste in this country is still unhappily obsessed with the 19th-century legacy of Teutonic sentimentalism which fits in well with the national preference for beef, beer and Beethoven (not, of course, the Beethoven of the late quartets). Between such "music-lovers" and Fauré a gulf inevitably yawns; for, as Mr. Suckling pertinently remarks: "the sentimental hearer who can be moved only by external evidence of emotion will find his (Fauré's) art unprofitable". So, of course, will those who still believe that music stopped after Beethoven, against whose deplorable influence on music since 1827, fostered by the assiduously propagated legend of the "frowning Titan", Mr. Suckling tilts a praiseworthy lance. For it is a common aberration of taste to mistake obscurity for profundity; and those who fall into this error are equally liable to mistake limpidity for shallowness. This is the attitude that militates against a proper appreciation of music such as Fauré's, for people so constituted, as Mr. Suckling shrewdly observes, "are inclined to assume that where no strivings are apparent nothing has been achieved; and they tend to overlook any original work in art which is presented to them with an air, not of having discovered a new country, but of having known all the time that it was there". Hence the failure to recognize Fauré for the great innovator he undoubtedly was. Mr. Suckling also points out that "what tended to make his discoveries less immediately noticeable was the fact that they were mainly in the *syntax* rather than the *vocabulary* of musical language"; and all critics have remarked on his extraordinary harmonic progressions which he managed with such unobtrusive and almost surreptitious skill. These exquisite and subtle manœuvres, frequently to be observed in Fauré's music, have been compared by both M. Koechlin and M. Jankélévitch to "the grace of a cat falling on its feet"; and I agree with Mr. Suckling when he says that Fauré's music, as a whole, exhibits those feline qualities which put the cat-tribe, aesthetically, in a class apart.

Yet Fauré has his limitations, and however much he excites our admiration and affection one has to recognize that after all his art moves in a sphere on the whole too

circumscribed quite to justify Mr. Suckling's claim that it is "worthy of a place among the greatest masterpieces" because that would mean comparison with *Don Giovanni* or the B minor Mass, the *Symphony of Psalms* or *Boris Godunov*. A feature of the book is the abundance of music-type illustrations in the text without which the numerous detailed analyses of the works would lose half their interest.

R. H. M.

Memoirs of an Amateur Musician. By Edmund H. Fellowes. Pp. viii + 220. (Methuen.) 1946. 10s. 6d.

Few books of musical reminiscence, few indeed of memoirs by scholar-clergymen, make as good reading as Canon Fellowes' pleasant pages. Despite certain complacencies and a rather quaint simplicity in the narrative style, this is an engaging book. Primarily, it is a record of one man's inexhaustible energy. In between his clerical duties he plays tennis in tournaments, transcribes the whole corpus of our Tudor composers, learns the lute, takes part as soloist or chamber-music player in concerts, delves into heraldry and genealogy, and keeps up an immense ring of friendships, all with the same untiring zest, throughout an otherwise sufficiently active and occupied life. "Amateur" is an accurate description, and there are no pretensions anywhere in these pages at anything else: and well might Dr. Fellowes be proud of the love and gusto which informed every action in his life.

Fellowes does not write a young man's book: a young man would be bored, I fear. It is a book for fathers, not for sons. And yet I am sure that it would be a salutary, almost cleansing, action if some of the younger people were to read it. The record of English musical life is interesting to a point of absorption. In a curious way, it is universal. I cannot think that it would do any harm to, or even distress, the younger folk to read about the suave and loud-voiced Canon Dalton (who was tutor to H.M. George V) in contrast to the acid and menacing figure of his son, Hugh Dalton, who taxes us. As a bridger of the times, one old enough to recall horse-trams and a confirmed aeroplane passenger since 1925, I am in a position to judge the good or bad of our "hungry generations". Plenty to poverty: service to strikes. That is the picture. Food there was then, labour there was: friendship, willingness, kindness there were, in the 1911's and 1912's. Today we are in the hungry 'forties once more. I suspect our theoretical politicians do not read history (except when it is edited). Fellowes gives us a picture of a brighter age, when a cleric could be an amateur: out of that amateurism poured the whole flood of our Elizabethan music. The "Golden Age" of England was revealed, not by a civil servant, but by one who is proud of his amateur status, and worked interminably for the common good.

This book presents an unobtrusive picture of a period. We walk through Oxford and Bristol and Windsor in its pages with Hadow and Colles, with Stainer (who is shown to be the great scholar he was, not just the youthful writer of popular anthems), with Marie Hall—that lovely player of the violin for whom Vaughan Williams wrote *The Lark Ascending* (her history is well told here, and the new encyclopedists should note the fading details). We meet many people: they are dead, but they should not be forgotten—"men of little showing, but their work continueth, greater than their knowing".

The fault apparent in these pages is that it does not tell the whole of the lively story of our last forty years of English music. The dullest chapter is the chapter from which one would have expected the greatest interest: it is called "Musicology and Research". Here, the author suffers acutely from *aposiopesis*, and *meiosis* as well. It is an English failing. "For various reasons, the [Carnegie] trustees could not finance further volumes." If this book were a history of modern research, I could overlook the preliminary quarrels: but it is not, and the quarrels are omitted. I observe that in the index, Canon Fellowes does not include Peter Warlock or Philip Heseltine, save to denigrate that composite man, and his colleague Philip Wilson, for stealing original research. Perhaps I know a little more than is published in this book: perhaps I am not quite happy that the history of the rediscovery of the Tudor composers has, one day, got to be written again—if it ever is. Fellowes had a chance here, and he has neglected it: to write the truth would

(as one turns to the athletic pages) not be "playing the game". Personally, I should not mind the truth of those early Carnegie days appearing in print. In fact, it is time they were made clear, lest, in the interests of English music, something more introspective and quarrelsome should come about anew.

There is a quotation which eludes my mind as I write, and also my reference books. The effect of that quotation is that good living depends upon a good liver. Dr. Fellowes' book shows that by combining enthusiasm, athletics, and musicology, he has passed the test of living and liver as successfully as Old Father William.

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Mozart on the Stage. By Christopher Benn. Illustrations by Kenneth Green. With an Introduction by Richard Capell. Pp. 178. (Ernest Benn, Ltd.) 1946. 15s.

Christopher Benn (1912-1941) served with and was killed in the Eighth Army in Cyrenaica. He was, in the words of his friend and introducer, Richard Capell (himself a war correspondent in the Middle East campaign), "a young Englishman of the generation, the first for centuries, in whose education and culture music was a regularly planted feature, not a snipped buttonhole, but a rooted growth". This book, which is pleasantly produced, with coloured and neutral illustrations inset, deals with the four best known of Mozart's operas (*Nozze*, *Giovanni*, *Cosi*, and *Zauberföhlé*), giving us for each the cast and short history, the synopsis of the story, an essay on the opera, and a second essay on the production thereof.

Of the pains and thought and care which have gone to the making of this study, rather slight in itself, I have no doubt. The detailed and exact information has, we are informed, been passed by Professor Edward Dent. And yet, I have the uncomfortable feeling that Mr. Richard Capell's loving (and even slightly apologetic) preface for his friend's writing is the best part of the book, which is (if I may coin such a phrase) Glyndebourne-ridden. No doubt in Heaven there will be an opera house where ideal productions of ideal operas will be a commonplace of daily eternity. In this world, so far as I have known it in life and in memoirs, that desirable state of perfection has not come about yet. Nationalization might, of course, work wonders: but I have a suspicion that not many professional performers, singers or actors or producers, will instantly join the ranks of the Civil Service on the great day of handing over the keys of the theatres and opera houses.

Quite frankly, I find this book to be the work of a theoretical amateur. I cannot help wondering what Mozart would think of it himself. I fancy he would laugh: and I am sure Handel would if the same semi-solemn but wholly serious process of analysis were to be applied to his spectacles on the stage. The listener, viewer, audience (what you will) is superimposed, not only upon the composer, but upon the performer. The producer dare not put a foot upon the iron ladder to have a chat with electrics: it is not according to the script. No working professional would dream of accepting the job of producing, or indeed playing in, a Mozart opera as this young man portrayed it. Life is too short: art is not long enough. The performer to-day is well aware how arm-chair critical his audience may well be. They know (in the vernacular) the earth: but the question is, do they know about the physical practice of performing Mozart's operas—or any other operas, for that matter? The Mozart about whom Christopher Benn wrote is not the Viennese prodigy, travelling endlessly in miserable stage-coaches and dying young. He is a transmogrified English-speaking Mozart, made a little too heavy because of Brahms and Covent Garden—a "great" composer to be *interpreted* and played to us as he *really meant*. Actually, the author was not in close touch, it seems, with the operatic scene of the eighteenth century. For us to-day, in truth, the Mozart idiom is two centuries old, the style of singing is imported, and the whole question of singers' acting (or actors' singing) had not arisen then as it seems to have now. The book is out of Mozart's period, and deals only with a too intense revival: it deals with golden memories of the inter-war years, memories inspired by the labours at Cambridge of Professor Dent. If Mozart

must live again for us in this guise, then Benn's book is a useful guide, though even then it seems to miss Mozart's sly humour. "Only a generation ago", writes Capell, "and the word 'photogenic' had not been coined." I have felt for many years that if you want to see and enjoy opera in England, it is an indispensable preliminary, a part of your education, that you should not be really interested in the theatre as an artistic medium.* This book, for all its title, bears out that view.

Vocal Vibrato Tremolo and Judder. By F. C. Field-Hyde. Pp. vii + 43. (Oxford University Press.) 1946. 3s. 6d.

Judder—Webster does not give it, nor O.E.D. supplement. Wright needs revising (one day), and I do not possess Partridge, who might include it. I doubt it. I fancy that this odd word, so descriptive as to be horrible, is the invention of Mr. Field-Hyde: if so, all honour to him for having introduced an important new word into the English language.

In an age of perpetual whistling, when communal conditions of life prevent singing (except the Butlin sort), and when the habitual listening-fare seems to be crooners, with their desired out-of-tune-ness and their forced chest-notes, it is a pleasure to absorb like fresh air a book such as this one, written by a practising singer and teacher, a veteran singer to-day, but one who knows his trade.

The author deals carefully with each degree of "wobble" in the voice, and gives a picture of each on diagrammatic lines. The picture on p. 9 is not pretty, as a sample of modern voices, to an older student of speaking and singing. He deals well (on p. 39) with the speaking voice—the emotional vibrato of the actor. It is good that the speaking and singing voices should be dealt with (as they are here) as operating the same physical machinery. And there is another slice of wisdom for a modern age: "it is an indispensable prerequisite that the singer really hears it in his own voice". The microphone exaggerates faulty intonation, for that is what all these faults are (vibrato the least, though Field-Hyde goes carefully into the appeal of the violinist's left hand).

Into this book, in crown octavo with a cut-flush paper cover, is heaped an immeasurable quantity of hard sense and creative information about the act of singing. We start with varied quotations from the learned, move on to scientific investigations and theories, then to a directly written account of the vocal mechanism as misused to produce an "appealing" waver in the voice. On pp. 30 and 31 there is an analysis of the three degrees of wavering, where "judder" is more deeply defined. I like the wording of the next chapter (VIII), "The Problem of Regaining Control".

This little book is very exact, despite occasional repetitions. It deals not only with the laryngeal actions, but with the psychological actions that cause the epiglottis and the cords to operate. The "unconscious 'will'", which makes singers forget the mechanism, is highly important. The ear is accorded full treatment. And there is little to pick out for censure. No one wants the art of singing confined to the academics, or held in leash by the theorists. Vocal song meets our ears, for its life and enjoyment, in the wide space of a concert hall. Singing is an action, and must so be dealt with in the training: not a theory to be studied by the young in "master-courses". Yet, here is a secret that can be learned without loss of personal pride, here, in this short book.

It might perhaps be added to Mr. Field-Hyde's "specific treatment" (p. 35) that control is often aided by practice on a changing vowel—EE to OO to AH to OO to EE: and that the nasalised initial has been known to help—i.e. singing exercises not on Ah-ah, but on Nah-ah—even Nah-Nah.

H. J. F.

* Contributors to THE MUSIC REVIEW have never been asked to "toe any kind of line". Accordingly, Mr. Foss' review appears as he wrote it. However, on another page in his review of *La Bohème* he castigates the San Carlo Opera Company for making no attempt to break away from tradition. We are reminded of Morton's fork and entirely disagree with Mr. Foss' disparagement of the theatrical aspect of opera. [Ed.]

Music and Society. By Wilfrid Mellers. Pp. 160. (Dobson.) 1946. 8s. 6d.

For the last ten years or so, ever since Mr. Mellers began to publish his articles, notably in *Scrutiny* as well as in the leading musical reviews, it has been obvious that he has a very good claim to be considered one of the most original and penetrating writers on music to-day. It was also clear that sooner or later he would produce a book of more than ordinary interest, and this prognostication has now, happily, been fulfilled.

I consider the present volume an important contribution to musical literature because it is a serious and original attempt (I know of no other book in English on quite these lines) to see music as a phenomenon closely, and, indeed, inevitably related to, and evolving on parallel lines with the growth of human society and civilization. Mr. Mellers rightly lays stress on the relation of music to language; the art has always attained its greatest degree of perfection in periods and in countries where it has been most closely bound up with either the vernacular or the language of the Church, and most sensitive to the inflections of human speech. This "intimate relation between music, language and life, which existed up to Purcell's day" is one of the main themes of this book, and the author has some penetrating things to say about the close connexion between folk-music and plain-song, and what he calls "the religious art-music of the Middle Ages". This interaction, he says, "pervades the melodic idiom of any healthy European community which has attained the status of a civilization", and he goes on to cite the example of the Troubadour songs, in which "religious and secular elements are so subtly interlinked that it is scarcely possible to disentangle them", dwelling later at some length on the "reciprocity between artists and people . . . manifested in the great period of the second half of the 16th century as much in the newly developed field of instrumental music as in vocal work . . . another sign of the merging of mediæval and modern worlds in this richest of all the phases of our cultural history".

Mr. Mellers' admiration (which we can all share) of the great English masters of what he calls the "Tudorbethan" period is unbounded, and he rightly lays stress on the fact that until the latter part of the 17th century English music had developed in a manner "no way separable from the whole development of European culture—a fact which is testimony at once to our and Europe's cultural vitality"; and he attributes the "unfortunate cultural deliquescence" which was a feature of England under the Restoration, to "the disparity between the popular and the cultivated taste", and to the fact that "in England the Christian humanist tradition turned sour, and the classical stabilization of the baroque was never effected; we fell pitifully between the 'protestant' and the 'aristocratic' stools".

The last part of the book is devoted to a critical analysis of the English Renaissance of the 19th century and after; and this chapter contains some valuations of contemporary British composers, notably of Rawsthorne, Tippett, Britten and Rubbra which reveal, as strikingly as anything in this book, the author's extraordinary critical "flair" and his sensitive awareness of the difference in temperament, inclination and training which have played their part in the formation of each of these musicians, and helped to determine their individual approach to the various problems confronting the creative artist in the modern world.

Mr. Mellers is also able to see Vaughan Williams in his right perspective as a figure of enormous significance in contemporary British music; and I agree with him in his estimate of the fifth Symphony as being the composer's supreme achievement. But I think Mr. Mellers is nearest the truth when he says that though never doubting the importance of Vaughan Williams, he has found it "rather difficult to decide what were the works on which his importance rested; I couldn't, that is, avoid a suspicion that his historical was greater than his intrinsic significance". That seems to sum up the position neatly. The author also has some interesting things to say about American music, and gives high praise to Copland and Blitzstein; this chapter concludes his survey of the contemporary scene.

But the main interest of the book undoubtedly lies in the chapters dealing explicitly with the various forms music has assumed throughout the ages, from mediæval monody

to 16th-century polyphony, and then through the "rhetorical presentation of emotion by solo voices (homophony) linked with instrumental technique through the social framework of the dance to the complete projection of the struggles of the human personality into absolute self-contained musical form"—phases which "correspond to the dominating phases in the evolution of European civilization . . . lyrical, rhetorical and dramatic". It is an ambitious scheme, but Mr. Mellers has evidently read widely and has an extensive acquaintance with old music about which he can write with erudition, although occasionally one could wish he would avoid using so many technical and (to the layman) terrifying words and endeavour to make his style rather less 'jargony' and involved. The following sentence, for example (selected at random; it is, unfortunately, by no means unique), does not make easy reading:—

"It is remarkable that even when the seven-tone mode was clearly established through the addition of fifths and fourths to the pentatonic additions to the original three-note figure, and some troubadour songs, for instance, were betraying an unmistakable diatonic tendency complete with the not naturally vocal sub-semitonic leading note, the vocal five-tone figure still maintains its deep anchorage on the evolution of melodic idioms, and pentatonic thought remained fundamental."

I recommend to Mr. Mellers a little practice with the pruning knife; and I think, too, that the book would gain in legibility if there could be more paragraphs to a page. It is so rich in content that one resents any blemishes in the actual presentation.

The illustrations are well chosen (mostly from old manuscripts in the British Museum or the *Bibliothèque Nationale*); there are abundant notes relegated to the appendix; a bibliography and a useful chart of outstanding names and dates in the history of music, literature and painting from 1000 A.D. to the present day.

R. H. M.

KEEP THE OBSEQUY SO STRICT

Free Thought and the Musician and other Essays. By Ernest Walker. Pp. 166. (O.U.P.) 1946. 8s. 6d.

All the time I have been reading these twenty-two essays (nine of which are reprinted from *The Times* or its *Literary Supplement*), extending from 1901 to 1933, I have been haunted by a vision of my childhood: a little boy, not myself, huddled at a street corner beside an angular governess who was saying, "Take off your cap, Johnny; a funeral is passing". It is a collection that the admirers of *A History of Music in England* will take to their hearts, grave, erudite, scientific, the work of a mind to which the Brahms Requiem was, and is, a *world-event* of the first magnitude. If, however, you happen to be a person who, with a considerable bump of veneration for Brahms, nevertheless sees that work as essentially not so very much better, though far more intellectually pretentious than *Elijah*, and just as sentimental, you may find little truly to your taste except the essays on Joachim, questions of tempo, the songs of Schumann and Brahms, separately and compared, and the portraits of John Farmer and Manns and Smith the drummer in the Crystal Palace Orchestra. I should be tempted to add the essay on Goethe and some composers were it not that the absence of any mention of the first of Beethoven's four settings of "Sehnsucht" made me gasp, until I observed that Dr. Walker avows that the Clärchen music in *Egmont* makes that heroine "live for us considerably more than anyone lives in *Fidelio*!". You rub your eyes at that and ask yourself (at least I did), "Has Dr. Walker ever lived?" Respect the academic mind! It knows so much more than one's own, but it does not follow that it may not have lost normal sensibility in the process—anyone in *Fidelio*! "Great art never wholly gives itself away" (p. 81). The centenary article on Mendelssohn (1909) ends with a plea for the scherzo (only) of the F minor Quartet, "half a dozen seldom-heard pages, not at all effective for their medium". Not a word about the slow movement, or the astonishing codas of the first and last. Perhaps it was not *safe* to say more at that date, but one would rather see no praise at all than such grudging patronage masquerading as fair play. Still the bridge must be kept at all costs, and what is given with one hand must be taken away with the other. This is felt

less in the analyses of Schumann and Brahms, where the enthusiasm gets the better of the academicism.

The title essay and "A Generation of Music" (read at a conference on recent developments in European thought in 1919) will let a foreigner into a good deal of what he may otherwise only learn by grievous experience of English musical parochialism and the Bumbledom of a sacerdotalism by no means even yet extinct. Sometimes he may wonder whether the words he reads have any meaning whatever—e.g. (p. 78) "Pheidias could, we may imagine, have appreciated Rodin across a gulf of two thousand years", for who are "we"? But let him rest assured; this is our English way, and the globe moves notwithstanding. The book is faultlessly produced, and the footnotes invariably informative.

"You may put on your cap, Johnny; the funeral has passed."

The Chamber Music of Mendelssohn. By John Horton. Pp. 65. (O.U.P.) 1946. 2s. 6d.

This modest handbook, written with restraint, understanding, and uncommonly good deductions (e.g. influence of Cherubini), fills a gap. Here are analyses of some twenty-two works, which, the Octet, the second 'cello Sonata, and the piano Trios excepted, are seldom heard. Mr. Horton rightly draws attention to the originality of Mendelssohn's key-scheme, the fact that chamber-music was his first and last love, and the influence of Beethoven at all periods of his life. This must be the first time the introduction of Mendelssohn's first quartet can have been set beside that of the "Harp", or the slow movement of his last beside that of the first Rasumovsky. Indeed the point might have been stressed further in that the recitative violin passage before the finale of the A minor Quartet derives clearly from a similar place in op. 132. The afflatus of Beethoven's last period is felt all over Mendelssohn's first, melodically, just as, structurally, the introduction of a scherzo into a finale harks back to the work that the boy prodigy played to Goethe, the C minor Symphony. If the publication of this book results in more frequent performances of the A major Quintet, the F minor Quartet, and the Andante and Scherzo of the unfinished Quartet, which in quiet pathos and delicacy show that Mendelssohn at the end was advancing as an artist through personal suffering, its appearance is more than timely. ("Oui?" (p. 8) should be "Qui?")

The Meaning of Musical History. By J. A. Westrup. Pp. 32. (O.U.P.) 1s. 6d.

The Deneke Lecture for 1945 is the work of a new broom; whether it sweeps clean or not remains to be seen; it is certainly clean-sweeping. In intention it is a plea against basing musical judgments on a theory of progress, and Parry is made to stand in a white sheet on the first page for rashly saying "the 17th century is, musically, almost a blank". Poor Sir Hubert! He has been "getting it" from many quarters lately, but I far prefer Ernest Newman's contention that his inevitable adherence to the German School prevented him from recognizing the genius of Berlioz to this professorial attack on another professor. A few pages later Tovey is rapped over the knuckles for insensitivity to Guillaume de Machault. No one will seriously contest Professor Westrup's inescapable conclusion that "so long as we regard music as a series of experiments in technique it will never awaken in us any emotional response"; but has one ever looked for a sensitivity to emotional responses from either historians or professors? We are grateful when accidentally we get it thence, that is all. In other words I should not be surprised if this Deneke Lecturer, in time, works out as hide-bound and arbitrary as his present butts. Already there is polite patronage (p. 27) of the musicologist; "there is no need to under-estimate his labours . . . something that he has saved from the scrap-heap may one day prove to be a vital piece of evidence". I think of Einstein's books on Gluck and Mozart, and smile. Well, we shall see! But Professor Westrup must beware of sentences like "The startling novelty of to-day will be a cliché in less than fifty years", for such a mode of expression is fitter on the lips of the senile or at least the *emeriti*.

Eugene Onegin by Tchaikovsky, English version by Edward J. Dent. (O.U.P.) 2s. 6d.
Don Pasquale by Donizetti, English version by Edward J. Dent. (O.U.P.) 2s. 6d.

Two more sprightly and perfectly "introduced" libretti by Professor Dent, in which the very careful study of the difference between Tchaikovsky's opera and Pushkin's verse-novel must be singled out for special praise, as well as the scene of the letter. It was easy, perhaps, to get the effect of lightness in the Donizetti, but the effect of social ease *plus* tragedy in *Onegin* is the result of a sensitive and exact historical consciousness.

E. H. W. M.

Incidental Music in the Sound Film. By Gerald Cockshott. Pp. 8. (British Film Institute.) 1946. 1s.

Now that composers of serious music are being drawn more and more towards writing for the screen, a whole new crop of not only technical, but aesthetic problems has arisen which will have to be thrashed out by film directors and musicians in collaboration. Ideas on the subject are no longer quite what they used to be in the days of the silent film, whose emotional "high spots" were underlined by a harassed pianist ploughing through a prearranged potpourri of "half-hours with the best composers"—or, more probably, the worst. Mr. Cockshott, in this little pamphlet, indicates some of the ways in which the modern composer has attempted to meet the exigencies of the sound-track, and while paying tribute to the good work of Vaughan Williams, Leigh, Walton, Bliss and Rawsthorne in this country, concludes that on the whole the best results have been obtained in France because "the best French directors have shown a greater understanding of the requirements of film music. . . ." Given such understanding the composer can be relied upon to do his part; without it he will be so handicapped that he will be unable to do justice either to himself or to the film. In any case, the partnership is bound to be a more or less uneasy one, usually to the disadvantage of the composer. Or can anyone convince me that the number of good films spoilt by bad music is greater than the amount of good music wasted on indifferent films?

R. H. M.

Hamline Studies in Musicology. Edited by Ernst Krenek. Pp. vii + 99. (Hamline University. School of Fine Arts. St. Paul, Minn.) 1945.

This small book, unpretentiously produced, contains many fascinating and often paradoxical ideas. It is the result of close collaboration between a distinguished composer and three of his pupils. This fact may justify a more extended review than the size of the book seems to require.

In the decade 1922-32 Krenek was one of the leading figures among the younger composers on the Continent, and his opera *Jonny spielt auf* was performed on more than fifty operatic stages all over the world. This success, however, did not have the effect on Krenek that it would have had on a composer less gifted and with less definite aims. He made himself acquainted with Schönberg's twelve-tone system and his mastery of the new technique can be seen from the score of his opera *Charles V*, performed in 1938 in Prague—a most successful attempt to solve the problem of opera in a new way. After the annexation of Austria, when his music was denounced by the Nazis as decadent art, Krenek migrated to America. His versatile mind turned to writing books on musical theory, and finally to studying and teaching the history of music. In the preface to the present book he points out that he, being a composer, "set out on his venture in musicology, not because he thought that he could do better than the professional musicologists, but because he found himself stimulated by their work to make a contribution for which he felt himself to be particularly qualified".

Krenek describes how his studies in 16th century counterpoint led him to see in Palestrina "a very special phenomenon", and in the style of Palestrina "too narrow a platform to serve as an exclusive basis for the teaching of counterpoint". This view has been expounded very thoroughly in E. Kurth's remarkable book on the elements of linear counterpoint (*Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts*, Berlin, 1922), in which the study of

counterpoint is based upon Bach's "melodic polyphony". I personally am of the opinion that both methods can be used with equal success, as long as the teacher makes it clear that the limitations to which the pupil is subjected have as their object the practical aim of forcing the beginner to work out his exercise under certain restrictions imposed upon him. Palestrina's counterpoint will prove a better training for those who have to write choral works, Bach's melodic polyphony for those whose natural inclination tends towards symphonic writing. I would, therefore, suggest that the best method is to start with counterpoint in the style of Palestrina and to proceed at a later stage to melodic polyphony, as a preliminary to the teaching of Fugue and Composition.

From the study of 16th century counterpoint Krenek turned to that of the 15th century, and it is to the polyphony of this period that the three essays by his pupils are devoted: "An analysis of the design of the 'Caput' Masses by Dufay and Okeghem in their Metric and Rhythmic aspects", by Russel G. Harris, now Professor of the Theory of Music at Baylor University, Waco; "A Contribution to the Problem of Mode in Mediæval Music", by Virginia Seay and "A Study of Linear Design in Gregorian Chant and music written in the twelve-tone technique", by Martha Johnson.

We hesitate to accept all the conclusions reached by Krenek and his gifted pupils. Those who are used to seeing the history of music as a whole know how careful it is necessary to be in accepting a new and fascinating theory, based on a relatively small number of documents. Krenek and his pupils are, however, certainly right in drawing attention to the "formulae" of Gregorian Chant, and to the working of this principle of composition in polyphonic music up to Schönberg and his circle. This principle, first studied by Dom A. Mocquereau, was put on a wider basis by A. Z. Idelsohn in his essay on the "Maqams" in Arabic music (S.I.M. XV). The formulae are, as a matter of fact, the constructive principle *par excellence* in Oriental music, and, with the transplantation of Christian music from the East to the West, were there too made the basis of melodic construction. (See my article in *Grove*, Supplementary vol., on "Eastern Church Music", and the introduction to *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae Transcripta*, vol. I. I may also refer to my forthcoming book, "Eastern Elements in Western Chant", *Mon. Mus. Byz.*, Amer. Ser., vol. I, which deals extensively with the problem of the formulae in Byzantine, Pre-Gregorian, Gregorian and Early Mediæval Chant.)

We must confine ourselves here to comment on these two points. But even from these cursory remarks the reader may see that the *Hamline Studies* are worth reading. The contents ranging from Early Christian Music to the last works of Schönberg, Webern and Krenek, show that both teacher and pupils have tried to assimilate the music they deal with and to make the music of the past alive. It also shows that Krenek is an outstanding teacher whose influence on the younger generation of American musicians and musicologists will soon become evident.

E. J. W.

Violin Varnish. A Plausible Re-creation of the Varnish Used by the Italian Violin Makers Between the Years 1550 and 1750 A.D. By Joseph Michelman. Pp. xi + 185. (Michelman, Cincinnati.) 1946. \$3.75.

Much has been written on the subject of old violins, and of their varnish in particular, but a spirit of romantic admiration and rhapsodic description rather than one of scientific investigation has characterised most of this literature. Exact data are, of course, available with regard to proportions, and the kind of wood used is easily ascertainable though its preparation is open to question. It is, however, the lost secret of the varnish used by the old Italian makers for a period of two hundred years from 1550 to 1750 A.D. that has been most open to speculation and conjecture and about which so little actual scientific knowledge has been divulged. A policy of freely exchanging ideas and information has not generally existed although almost every violin maker had his own private formulas for varnishes.

It is said that a finished but unvarnished violin has a strong tone at first, but if the instrument is left in this state, the tone soon becomes poor and feeble in quality. There can be little doubt that varnish improves its tonal qualities, even as there can be little

doubt that it was first applied as a preservative for the wood and also for its decorative qualities.

Joseph Michelman has been experimenting scientifically for more than eight years on the re-creation of the old Italian varnish, and in this book gives the result of his investigations which appear to have been very thorough. He has examined most of the writings available on the subject, and not the least interesting are the chapters he devotes to them. He quotes at length from the Norwegian violinist Ole Bull and from the fascinating papers that Chas. Reade the novelist wrote for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1872 on the historical exhibition of old instruments at South Kensington. In his experiments he has taken into account the availability of raw materials during the period 1550-1750, in which it is universally agreed the varnish was made, and has naturally rejected those that were not freely obtainable. For instance, gamboge, a yellow resinous gum of Chinese origin, which has been supposed to have been used as a colouring agent, was not available on the European market until the 17th century. Ole Bull points out that the varnish was common to the painter, the varnisher and the gilder and was used on furniture, which goes far to prove that its ingredients were readily to hand. All the dyes, too, used in the various coloured varnishes, yellow, orange, and the various reds were of natural origin, for the synthetic dyes and pigments of modern chemistry were unknown to the old violin makers. These colouring agents must have been of a very permanent nature as considerable periods of sun exposure were required for drying. Stradivarius refers to exposure of the violins to the sun, and in a letter to Galileo in 1638 occurs the sentence: "It (violin) cannot be brought to perfection without the strong heat of the sun". Michelman asserts that "to date a satisfactory substitute for sunlight to accelerate the drying of the varnishes has not been found, and this excerpt from a letter written over three hundred years ago is as applicable as ever".

Every detail appears to have been painstakingly examined by the author before making his experiments and chapters are devoted to the chemical formulas for the varnishes and colouring agents which will be principally useful to the expert; but very wisely he sums up in a chapter "The varnishes simplified", which will make things clearer for the amateur. Apart from this there is much in the book of a fascinating character for the general reader. Unfortunately, Mr. Michelman has been unable to obtain access to material from authentic violins made by the old masters, and so it has been impossible either to confirm or disprove the results of his experiments by modern micro-analytical methods. Hence the sub-title to his book in which he describes his work as "A plausible re-creation".

E. H.

The Edwin A. Fleisher Music Collection in the Free Library of Philadelphia. A Descriptive Catalogue. Volume I, 1933, \$15.00; Volume II, 1945, \$12.00. 522 and 555 pp. (The Free Library of Philadelphia.)

The collection was founded in 1909 by Mr. Fleisher for a boys' amateur orchestra. It has grown to a very large and useful library of scores and parts, more than five thousand compositions for orchestra of any size and of any combination with solo instruments. The collection contains many works of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but mostly works by American, Latin American, Russian and European composers of the present century. Besides printed music, there are numerous manuscript copies of scores and parts which were either unavailable to the collection in print, or not printed at all.

The catalogue gives various information: life-dates of composer, editor or arranger, titles in original language and in English, modern publishers of the score or their agent, instrumentation, approximate length of time of performance, date of composition, and details of first performance.

It may be remembered that long ago Theodor Müller-Reuter, in his *Lexikon der deutschen Konzert-Literatur* (Vol. I, Leipzig, 1909, dealing with Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Richard Strauss, etc.; and a supplement, 1921,

dedicated to Beethoven and Haydn) started a general catalogue of a similar nature, only more exhaustive. His excellent fragment even gives some bibliographical details.

The Philadelphia catalogue is not so much a reference book for musicologists as for practical musicians: conductors, critics, programme-compilers and music-dealers. Since music-dealers have no English counterpart to Hofmeister's periodical catalogues for reference, this work may be of special help to them and to their customers. The Fleisher catalogue, however, lists only a special collection for orchestra, not the whole literature of music; it includes numerous items of minor importance, many arrangements and incomplete sets of the published works of great composers.

The compiler of the first volume was Miss Edith Werber, who had the assistance of Karl Geiringer. The second volume was compiled by Arthur Cohn, David Dubinsky and Nicolas Slonimsky, with some contributions from Alfred Einstein, Karl Geiringer, Sir Henry J. Wood, Harold T. Scull and others.

This catalogue contains much useful information, but there are also a number of misleading points, some incomplete dates (partly due to the fact that Alfred Loewenberg's *Annals of Opera* was not published until after the appearance of Volume I) and some mistakes. It is strange that the formula *unpubl.* is used not only in the common sense, for unpublished works, but, according to the *Explanatory Remarks* (p. 507) for works "which have been copied by the Free Library"; particularly so in the case of Haydn symphonies listed as *unpubl.*, some of which in fact have been published. A tendency to bewilder the reader by this practice is illustrated again on page 859, where Mozart's *Sonate da Chiesa* (K. 241 and 263) are listed, in photographic score and parts, as *unpubl.*, while the note to these items tells us that they were first published by Einstein in *Music and Letters*, January, 1940.

Here are some corrections of major importance: Beethoven's incidental music to Goethe's *Egmont* (p. 15) was not produced at the first performance of this play in Vienna, on 24th May, but at a later performance, on 15th June, 1800. (It was not ready for the first night.) That Handel's *Water Music* (p. 83) was produced on 17th July, 1717, is known not so much from "a contemporary report recently discovered in the State Archives at Berlin", as from the long record in the *Daily Courant* of 19th July, 1717. Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (p. 135) was not composed in Prague, it was only finished there. His *Haffner Symphony* (K. 385), the first performance of which is not indicated on page 138, was written on the occasion of the knighthood of Siegmund Haffner, junior, and performed in Salzburg on 29th July, 1782. Schubert's early opera, *Die Freunde von Salamanca*, said to have been "probably never performed" (p. 175), was in fact produced in 1828 and in 1934 in three different arrangements; a fourth arrangement, it is true, has never been performed. His Overture *Die Zauberharfe* was published as *Rosamunde* Overture but never used for this play. His Overture *Alfonso und Estrella* was written expressly for this opera and used subsequently for *Rosamunde*, and not vice versa. (He never composed an Overture to *Rosamunde*.) The spurious Mozart song, *Wiegenlied* (p. 305), was written by Bernhard Flies, not by "Dr. Fries". Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasia*, dealt with on page 367 in connection with Liszt, is said to have been written "probably 1820"; the autograph is dated November, 1822. Haydn's *Two Marches* "composed . . . for Sir Henry Harpur . . . and presented by him, to the Volunteer Cavalry of Derbyshire Embodied in the Year, 1794" (p. 807) are not unpublished, but were published in that year by William Simpkins in London; the only two copies known of the printed score were, alas! sold about 1940 from England to America and Switzerland.

In any work of this description a few errors are likely to creep in, but on the whole this is a very meritorious production.

O. E. D.

Thèmes Variés. By Reynaldo Hahn. Pp. 302. (Janin.) 1946.

These are delightful musical essays in the genre of the Berlioz feuilleton, and though the point of view is very much 1900-1914-non-Debussy, they have vitality of a sort that many austere and more analytic treatises have not. To sense M. Hahn correctly one must not only think of *Le ciel pardessus le toit* and *Le Dieu bleu*, but of the reconstituted

Mireille with the original sad ending. The title of one piece, "De-ci De-là", would have been applicable to the whole collection. We start with three long sections on Mozart, where it is found ironical that Salzburg, which he abominated, should be the centre of his cult; thence to *Fidelio*, *Genoveva*, *Rossiniana*, *La Prise de Troie*, the *Mireille* business, Bizet, Massenet (*Ariane* and *Werther*), Fauré's incidental music to *Pelléas* and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, a defence of the Conservatoire, notes on conductors, and (precious this to balletomanes) souvenirs of Nijinsky, with a beautiful letter to the author in which he speaks of his system of dance-notation, remarks on singing and (in a section called "L'Ardoise de Beckmesser") some valuable remarks on Gounod's Mephistopheles. I remember an Oxford Doctor of Music speaking in print of "the religious music of a person like Gounod", and if you feel like that about Gounod, Massenet or Saint-Saëns this is certainly not the book for you, but if you have an operatic mind and a sense of humour it is.

BERLIOZ

Le Faust de Berlioz. By Adolphe Boschot. Pp. 182. (Paris: Plon.) 1945.

Hector Berlioz, Une Vie Romantique. By Adolphe Boschot. Pp. 351. (Paris: Plon.) 1945.

M. Boschot's study of Berlioz' *Faust*, published for the third time on the eve of the work's centenary, is at first sight irritating because of its efflorescence (over twelve pages of enthusiasm for the "Invocation to Nature"), but informative truth percolates the zeal. The story of the MS., and Weckerlin's obscuring the name of the Conservatoire's real benefactor by a pasted slip, the analysis of the *Huit Scènes de Faust* (1829) in relation to the masterpiece of 1846, and the informative note on the date of the *Marche Hongroise*, probably no more written in a single night than the *Marche au Supplice*, are highlights in this essentially "popular" analysis. I append some further points that have occurred to me in its perusal.

1. P. 56. In the *Journal des Débats* (6th Sept., 1846) Berlioz wrote of the work as "espèce d'opéra que j'élucubre en ce moment". This statement affords surely a justification for keeping Berlioz' *Faust* in the operatic repertoire. At any rate it shows that in writing it he was thinking of an *operatic* success so essential to the recognition of a composer in France, at a time when his enemies were all-powerful at the Opéra, and its doors were closed to him.
2. P. 93n. M. Boschot notes an emotional association between the "Invocation to Nature" and the C sharp minor movement of Bach's E major violin Concerto, which Berlioz almost certainly did not know. I detect a similar association between the D major opening of the whole work (Faust in the fields) and the second movement of Beethoven's C sharp minor quartet, which Berlioz must have known. The "Oui, soufflez, ouragans!" of this invocation probably derives from "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!" etc. (*Lear*, III, 2), and looks as if Berlioz had King Lear rather than Faust in mind here.
3. P. 73. Berlioz abandoned the idea of a long pedal point for the conclusion of the *Menuet des Follets*, and added "un drôle de petit trille, *coda* courte, qui tire-bouchonne, et qui fait penser. . . . A quoi fait penser cette *coda*?" Exactly this bass trill will be found at the close of the slow movement of Weber's piano Sonata in D minor, (Op. 49) a movement often played separately, and familiar no doubt to Berlioz. Note an affinity between the rhythms of this orchestral number and the *Marche Hongroise*, which may help in dating both.
4. P. 94. The *Récitatif et Chasse* has affinities with the hunting music (E flat) in *Euryanthe*.
5. P. 98. M. Boschot notes that the language of the Demons in "Pandaemonium" resolves itself into regular Alexandrines, and mentions Swedenborg. Swedenborg (*Heaven and Hell*, 245, 575) describes the language of devils as *stridor dentium*, and

doubtless the use of the letters *d*, *k*, *x* in this gibberish is an attempt to render gnashing of teeth.

Of the new edition of the same writer's *Une Vie Romantique*, it is enough to say that it is a reissue—the preface is that of the fourteenth edition (1939)—reset and “corrigé” (1942).

Le Livre des Chansons. By Henri Davenson. Pp. 590. (Cahiers du Rhône, Neuchatel.) 1944.

The 139 French popular songs, succinctly annotated, are prefaced by a study, with bibliography, of 148 pages, erudite, ordered and extremely interesting. M. Davenson has made no hazardous attempts like Doncieux to reconstitute a primitive text in the case of each song. He is as far from such a-priorism as from the *Rezeptionstheorie*, that considers all popular song as an emanation from the art of the cultured classes. A scholar with the trained eye of an artist, he notes, often diagrammatically, the ups and downs of a song between the people and the intelligentsia, and he concludes that French folksong is the work of the French people as a whole. The four divisions of his study are the nature, the double origin, the history, and the aesthetic of “la chanson populaire française”. The name of Gérard du Nerval, the romantic who brought the old ballads into the literary cénacles, in the forefront of his prolegomena, defines the admirable quality of his imaginative approach. He shows us how the melody of *Le Roi Renaud* follows the line of *Ave maris stella* and *La Fille-soldat* that of a Gregorian *Kyrie*, how a famous *Noël* of Doumergue (about 1660), through the Provençal *Marche de Turenne*, finds its way in 1872 into the score of *L'Arlésienne*, how Yvette Guilbert represented for our parents the equivalent of Gaultier-Garguille under Louis Treize, and Darius Milhaud, introducing *Valparaiso* into his comic opera *Le Pauvre Matelot*, is in a line with Adam de la Halle. And all this by the way! He has no wild notions concerning the antiquity of melodies. Some go back to the sixteenth century, many to the seventeenth and most to the eighteenth. A thirteenth-century air like *Voulez-vous que je vous chante?* is exceptional and doubtfully “popular”. *Malbrouck*, for instance (for which Loquin suspected Beaumarchais as responsible) does not come on the scene till 1781, but the words “mort et enterré” hark back to 1563 and the funeral of the Duc de Guise. *Au clair de la Lune*, which closes this anthology, appears to be no earlier than 1790. *L'Ivrogne et le Pénitent*, possessing the characteristics of a medieval *débat*, may be, thanks to the erudition of Coirault, the work of a Valenciennes artisan named Hayez, and is certainly not anterior to the middle of the eighteenth century. What a true poet can do for a ballad (and what Percy certainly did not do for his *Reliques*) is illustrated on p. 267 by the line “Qui s'en allaient glaner aux champs”, which Nerval in 1842 gave to the ancient and repopularized *Saint Nicolas et les trois petits Enfants*. These very few examples may give some idea of the riches of a beautifully printed book teeming with learning, never ostentatiously displayed. I hesitate, where I have enjoyed and learnt so much, to criticize. I think, when *Variations* by Boieldieu, Hérold and Habeneck find a place (p. 582) a note of Mozart's on *Ah! vous dirai-je, maman* (p. 567), which affords a date for the popularity of this song (1778, K. 265), should be inserted. It is perhaps unnecessary to state that *Malbrouck* lends its air to *We won't go home till morning* and *For he's a jolly good fellow*, but M. Davenson should not be too pervicacious a Francophil to omit mention of Beethoven's use of it in the “Battle Symphony” (op. 91, 1813). In the note (p. 319) on *Hier, sur le pont d'Avignon* the “ronde enfantine” that everyone knows is mentioned, but no date given for it or its air, which is not the air in the text. In no other case is our curiosity or ignorance sent empty away.

Traité de la Musique selon l'Esprit de Saint Augustin. By Henri Davenson. Pp. 190. (Cahiers du Rhône, Neuchatel.) 1944.

This is a remarkable little book, beautifully conceived, and executed with the finesse of a scholar and the zeal of a priest; a consideration, ordered and logical, of the aims of music from the angle (the mathematical aspect solely excluded, with sound reasons) of the Augustinian *De Musica*. The wealth of illustration, especially from Neoplatonic

sources, is considerable, but M. Davenson wears his weight of learning like a flower, and the pitfall of footnotes is ingeniously avoided by glosses in the text itself, religious topics being introduced by an obelus, musical ones by a quaver, and such other references as precision might exact by an asterisk, a proceeding that soon becomes not merely familiar but oddly delightful. Although the main contention is that music should be thought of as *ad majorem gloriam Dei*, and as referring, Platonically, to a silent tract of the mind, a "place of the ideas", this disciple of St. Augustine is as far from advocating a "Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone" view of the art as he is from condemning light music for being light. His work, moreover, is addressed far more to the solitary amateur, who works pieces out on the piano in order to penetrate their meaning, than to the person who "suit assidûment les concerts, ne manque aucune des grandes auditions de la saison". Whatever you make of his argument, which he presents with something of Pascal's crystalline lucidity, you can always find pleasure in the phrasing. Take, for example, this sentence in his discussion of the view that the charm of music is only a particular form of the beauty of this perishable world: "Le chant du luth rend le même son déchirant que la plante du palmier que la cognée attaque: ici et là, une même voix attristée chante l'universelle mélancholie des choses, la tristesse de passer, de n'être qu'un reflet sur l'onde qui s'efface". Let none mistake; here is style.

Musiciens. By André Suarès. Pp. 251. (Editions du Pavois, Paris.) 1945.

The manner of these ten essays, which include one on Baudelaire, is less that of a musical critic or poet than that of the fashionable drawing-room lecturer. Their verbal florituri are reminiscent of Karmazinov's "Merci" in *The Possessed*. Nearly half the book is devoted to Beethoven and rhetorical genius, from this angle of approach: "Si le poète n'est pas l'interprète du musicien, la musique est vide". As may be imagined, M. Suarès is much more at home discussing "Liszt the magnanimous" than "the great deaf", in whom he finds a figure comparable, on the literary side, to Hugo and, on the democratic-emotional, to Rousseau. The slow movement of op. 106, "the sanctuary of the sonata", strikes him as a temple, the twentieth variation of op. 120 as a granite tower, with the ocean on its three sides and the desert on its fourth, and the solitary composer speaking from within it. But perhaps the most revealing information he gives us about his musical intelligence is his detection of mysticism in *Parsifal*, and nowhere (not even, apparently, in the *Et Incarnatus*) in the Mass in D, while Amfortas and the bird project him into a sort of Maeterlinckian duologue. In the essay on the improvisatore is dropped the dictum that Chopin, "dont la valeur est si faible", has neither grandeur nor force. In fact the whole book is redolent of a not uncommon type of mind that makes a virtue of judging an artist's work *entire* through a haze of political shibboleths and facile antitheses undisciplined by any sense of the problems of design involved in *particular* works. On one page Beethoven is the Prometheus who delivered music, on another he is the substituter of the musical poem for all the consecrated forms of music. This Beethoven is the cinema figure beloved of Emil Ludwig: "Tout est pathétique pour Beethoven, et l'art n'est rien s'il ne rend le pathos de cette grande âme". What nonsense! Think of the Allegretto of the eighth Symphony. A comparison on p. 187 between Liszt and Berlioz (allowed to be a painter of genius) is similarly enlightening. The quality of the latter's song "est bien médiocre"—this of the composer of *Absence!*—while Liszt is "'voyant' dans tous les sens". After this one is hardly surprised to read that the *Valse* of Ravel stands forth as a "chef d'œuvre de la symphonie nouvelle".

Le Folklore à la Semaine de France. Pp. 240. (Editions Jacques Vautrain, Paris.) 1945.

This is a collection, which appears to have been made in a military camp in 1941 by more than fifty hands, of traditional songs and dances (with instructional diagrams for the latter) from all parts of France including the Basque Provinces. Its general appearance is that of the book of the words of a pageant, but in (e.g.) associating the last movement of the *Symphonie Fantastique* with the contemporary rise in France of folklore as a

science, the manner of its introductory sections rises slightly superior to such productions, with which its coloured pictures aline it.

Correspondance de Claude Debussy et Pierre Louÿs (1893-1904). Pp. 207. (Librairie José Corti, Paris.) 1945.

M. G. Jean-Aubry, who contributes the masterly 23 pages of introduction, had half completed a classification of this interesting correspondence, when he found that M. Henri Bourgeaud had been working on it for some time, and it is M. Bourgeaud who edits this text, admirably, as it seems to me, without too many notes and with a mention of the source of each letter, many of which have been culled from the autograph-catalogues of second-hand booksellers.

Debussy was thirty-one and Louÿs not yet twenty-three, when this friendship, terminated by the former's second marriage, began. The two parties were unevenly matched intellectually, and one has only to compare the words and the music of the sole extant evidence of their co-operation, the three *Chansons de Bilitis*, to see how. Debussy was a visionary, Louÿs a practical man of the world exploiting a superficial brand of classicism. At the start we see the poet passionate for Wagner's music, at the close bracketing Erlanger with Debussy as a setter of his words. But there is something wholesome and thoroughly genial in his encouraging and affectionate letters to the older man, so much more secretive and evasive. Mr. Lockspeiser in his study (*Debussy: The "Master Musicians" Series*) quotes a letter of 1898, No. 118 in this collection, expressing a desperate yearning to lean on a friend, "surtout par lassitude de lutter contre d'imbéciles impossibilités, en outre méprisables", and he cites the testimony of Valérie as to Debussy finding in Louÿs "the most precious support in his career". These letters bear that out. Yet, reading between the lines, one can see how much in his "vieux dévoué" the poet failed to comprehend, though for ever lightening his load by pleasantry and good nature. Nearly all the musical quotations come in his letters. He was not the man to let a chance slip. The wonder is that, Debussy, following his inner light, could have succeeded in imposing his genius on a Parisian audience by an opera, as Berlioz, for instance, never did. One comes away from this book with a genuine admiration for the best-seller author of *Aphrodite*, as a man. The scholar will be interested in finding the synopsis of *Cendrelune*, the libretto that gave way to *Pelléas*, as well as proof that the six *Epigraphes* of 1914 were also inspired by prose pieces in *Chansons de Bilitis*.

E. H. W. M.

Opéras, Intermezzos, Ballets, Cantates, Oratorios, joués en Russie durant le XVIII^e siècle.
Essai d'un répertoire alphabétique et chronologique. By R.-Alois Mooser. Pp. xi + 173. (Geneva.) 1945.

Mr. Mooser's repertory of Operas, Intermezzos, Ballets and Oratorios gives a complete picture of musico-dramatic performances in Russia in the 18th century. It is astonishing to find that so many works of famous Italian, French and German composers found their way to the theatres of Moscow and St. Petersburg, where they were performed either in the original language or in Russian translations. Works of Russian composers are also included in the list, but they form a small minority. Yet the fact is important that Russian musicians of the 18th century composed works for the opera. It explains the splendid development of operatic music and of ballet in Russia in the 19th century. Russian society must have been well acquainted with the musical development of Western Europe. Grétry, Paisiello and Sarti seem to have been their favourite composers; Mozart's *Magic Flute* was performed in Russia as early as 1794. Mr. Mooser's book is a valuable contribution to the study of the history of Opera.

E. J. W.

Reviews of Music

D. Scarlatti. *Concerto No. 1 for Oboe and Strings*. Arr. G. Bryan. (Chester.) 5s. This charming five movement suite, performed by Leon Goossens with the Jacques string orchestra, here appears for oboe and piano. Mr. Gordon Bryan has effectively treated the polonaise, wisely not being too generous with the octaves in the bass. This, the minuetto, with the five bar trill for the soloist, and the simple aria stand out, framed rather than surpassed by the canzonetta and tarantella.

A. Caldara. *Canto*. Violin (or Viola or Cello) and Piano. Arr. Max Rostal. (Chester.) 2s.

It would be a good thing in "arrangements" of this sort, if a prefatory note stated the date and the original form of the piece in question. This melody is not particularly inspired, but effective enough, no doubt, to show off the violin as a soulful asset. Until the last page, where there is some crossing, the piano is hardly more than a carpet, and it is made to hurry in the last three bars so that the A above it may be sustained without difficulty, or so one imagines.

H. Purcell. *Air-Dance-Ground from Dido and Aeneas*. Viola and Piano. Arr. Elisabeth Lutyens. (Chester.) 2s. 6d.

I.e. "Thanks to these lonesome vales" (Act II), "Sailors' Dance" (Act III, transposed), "When I am laid in earth" (Act III). Is this really necessary?

V. Lambelet. *Oh, for my true love*. (Chester.) 2s.

Ah, be not too sweet. (Chester.) 2s.

There is a refined contrast in the treatment of these two lyrics. The poem of 1800 (in the last verse "glowing" seems to be a misprint for "growing") is set in an unsophisticated flowing style with charming harmonic changes; while Mary Webb's sentimental lines have all their unctuousness brought out by an accompaniment that introduces crashing chords and an *ff* octave upward run for "kind to me". Both admirable, in their line, the modern drawing-room ballad.

E. H. W. M.

Wilfrid Mellers. *Four Shakespeare Songs*, for Women's Voices. (O.U.P.) 9d.

The absence of any feeling of tonality and the perpetual (and apparently arbitrary) shifting from common chord to unrelated common chord, give to the first and last of these settings a sense of irritating effort to achieve little. In Ophelia's Mad Song, however, this technique has some musical point; and Mr. Mellers' setting suggests Ophelia's lack of balance without removing any of the pathos from the words.

Ralph Greaves. *When I am dead, my dearest*. (O.U.P.) 2s.

Suitably sobbing chords surround each sad sentence in this song; but listeners are more likely to weep at the over-emphasis of the sentiment and banality of the melody in this unfortunate setting.

Music for Two Pianos.

Alan Richardson. *Debutante*. 4s.

Grandmother's Waltz. 4s. 6d.

On Heather Hill. 4s. 6d.

Bach. *Happy be ye, souls elect* (arr. Arnold Foster). 4s. (All O.U.P.)

The three pieces by Mr. Richardson are written in an idiom of a type which has gained much popularity as a result of the vogue of the Concerto on the films. Interest, maintained chiefly by regular rhythms, is reinforced by sophisticated harmony of a many-note

perpetually-enharmonic type, and by showy arpeggios and runs. The Two-Piano writing is generally effective, particularly in *Heather Hill* and the neat *Debutante*; while *Grandmother's Waltz* is more frankly popular.

The Bach arrangement is one of a series of "easier Two-Piano pieces", and this beautiful *Aria* is skilfully transcribed for a medium which, with its greater scope for pedalling and doubling, falsifies Bach's orchestral sonorities much less than does the solo piano. The voice part, wordless, inevitably becomes absorbed in the general structure; and the arranger is probably wise to make little differentiation save in dynamics between the entries of the solo and the echoes of its melody in the *ritornello*.

George Dyson. *At the Tabard Inn*, Overture to the *Canterbury Pilgrims*. Miniature Score. (O.U.P.) 5s.

The trumpet call and brass flourish with which this overture begins aptly set the mood of the music which is to follow; and throughout there is plenty of swagger in this lively piece, with its wealth of tunes and bright orchestration. As a showy beginning to the *Canterbury Pilgrims* no doubt the music is very effective; but it is less likely that it would stand as a concert piece out of its context, save as a useful warmer-up for the orchestra. The very quantity of the tunes (though many are closely related with one another) and the episodic nature of the form, with its consequent lack of any real working-out section, stamp this music as being essentially a prelude to further events rather than an incident rounded and whole in itself.

George McKay. *Sinfonietta No. 4*. Miniature Score. (University of Washington Press.) \$2.50.

There are some excellent moments in this unpretentious little work, the first movement of which has a classical wit and elegance. The whole work indeed has a sparkling clarity of phrase and form, but it is only in the first movement that content and mode of utterance seem perfectly to match one another. Perhaps it is because of the complete success of this delightful movement that the two succeeding ones make a less vivid impression; for one tends to judge them in the light of their predecessor. Thus the slow *Pastorale*, despite some beautiful melodies, is not so individual in utterance; its intention is more passionate, but its sentiment is more conventional. Similarly, the Finale, while being admittedly the most lighthearted in intention, disappoints with its series of dance-like episodes,—and the melodies tend to be trite, whereas the main theme of the first movement, for all its wit, had character and strength. Other general criticisms could be made,—of the composer's habit (in the second and third movements) of attaching blocks of chords to his melodies moving parallel with them, a practice which soon tires the listener,—of his tendency to write accompaniments which degenerate into formulae. But the work has many more virtues than vices. It is always enjoyable; and one merely grumbles a little because its opening promises more than its sequel can perform.

It is worth adding that the score, although lithoprinted, is extremely clear to read, and is a pleasant contrast to the appallingly messy photographed copies with which some English publishers try to ruin our sight.

Robin Orr. *Sonatina*, for Violin and Piano. (O.U.P.) 5s.

This Sonatina was one of the ten works selected for recommendation by the Committee for the Promotion of New Music, in 1944; it well deserves publication. The composer has succeeded in using many of the clichés of the new academicism, and yet fashioning vital and attractive music out of them. The first movement, for example, based on the melodic intervals of the seventh and the fourth (and adhering strictly to the patterns thus formed), looks dry on paper; but, despite the deliberately impersonal nature of the material, the music, given an impetus by lively rhythmic patterns, is bright and effective. The quick Finale is equally impersonal; and here, in places, one feels that there is a too rigid adherence to the pattern regardless of the effect on the ear. Yet the movement

as a whole comes off, aided again by rhythmic vitality and effective passage work like the recurring humorous descent of the whole tone scale in broken thirds. There are some crudities: few of the cadences are satisfactory; the slow movement does not seem to strike a balance between passion and pattern; and the gritty middle section of the Finale needs more than rhythmic variation to make its length tolerable. But taken as a whole the work is skilful and imaginative, and has the additional advantage of being fairly easy to perform.

Michael Tippett. *Concerto* for double string orchestra. Miniature Score. (Schott.) 5s.

Of all Michael Tippett's works this is the one which is likely to have the widest appeal; for not only has it complete buoyancy of spirits, but also a wealth of tunes which makes it easily approachable on first hearing. In no sense, however, is the work demagogic. True, the rhythmic complexities are less than in the second Quartet, for example, and the harmony (particularly in the second movement) is more conventional than, for instance, is that of the first Quartet or parts of *A Child of Our Time*, but at the same time none of the distinctive qualities of the composer's more esoteric works is lacking, so that there is every chance of this Concerto being that rare thing, both a popular modern work and a good one. In a sense it would be hard to give any work higher praise than this; for it implies a fusion between the composer's aim and the public's need. And every time this is achieved it brings nearer to realization the lost ideal of sympathy between composer and ordinary listener—of music which is approachable, yet modern and not merely Contemporary (with a capital C). I do not mean that this lack of mutual sympathy is always the composer's fault; far from it. But when a composer is able to write a work which is in no way insincere yet has an appeal beyond a coterie (however well-intentioned), it advances the cause of modern music far more than a pile of essays and a hundred technical treatises.

Whilst being unquestionably "modern", then (though more so in rhythm and texture than in harmony), this Concerto still has qualities which the ordinary music-lover can rarely perceive in contemporary music, so often is he repelled by the means before being touched by the emotion. Here is forceful argument, in the more didactic first movement—romanticism, in the ravishing main tune of the second movement and the no less expressive fugato which follows—and passionate excitement in the soaring melody in the coda to the Finale. Yet there is no pandering to sensation-lovers; the emotion is clean, the passion pure, and the argument never becomes mere rhetoric. Enlivening all is the rhythmic resource which carries through successfully the loosely knit last movement, and gives character and vitality to tunes (like that of the first episode in the Finale) which are melodically undistinguished. For many this work should act as the bridge, which is so sorely needed, between the Old and the New.

N. G. L.

NEW ASPECTS OF CONCERTO AND SYMPHONY

Arnold Schönberg. *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte* for String Quartet, Piano and Reciter, op. 41, full score. (G. Schirmer.) 12s.

Béla Bartók. *Concerto* for Orchestra, pocket score. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 10s.

Walter Piston. *First Symphony*, full score. (G. Schirmer.) \$2.00.

William Schuman. *Concerto* for Piano and small Orchestra: Version for Two Pianos. (G. Schirmer.) 10s. 6d.

A spate of new orchestral music wrestling obviously with the eternal problem of how to reconcile the excruciating demands of symphonic tradition with the ebullience of new personal styles "in the making", may give us a fair picture of the most characteristic cross-currents in serious contemporary composition.

The list is motley and so are the artistic aims of its authors, of whom two at least have acquired world fame by universal consent. Schönberg's *Ode to Napoleon* and Bartók's last orchestral essay deserve the honour of being mentioned first. Both works are characteristic specimens of their composer's maturest style, both show them engrossed in old problems somewhat aloof from the burning topicality of our present musical day.

They also go a long way to prove, relevantly, that even the most "progressive" composer may reach an age and a situation of creative ossification in which every further step must by necessity lead back to the original creative centre—for the simple reason that the circle of creative possibilities has closed.

Schönberg's *Ode* does not contain anything startlingly new for the connoisseur of this great and uncompromising artist. The Reciter, with his pedantically pitched speaking part, is well known from the far-off days of "Des Sommerwinds wilde Jagd", when Schönberg suddenly in the second part of the *Gurrelieder* began to discover his own style among the relics of a post-Wagnerian musical grammar. Even the intricate relationship of this Reciter to a carefully balanced "Consort" of chamber instruments has been plumbed to the depths in *Pierrot lunaire*. The mechanism of Schönberg's twelve-tone style, its telling curves in the strings as well as its surprising results in almost tonal harmonies of the piano, are as fascinating as ever. The declamatory interpretation of Byron's verses puts the idea of a preconceived vision of Hitler's downfall across very convincingly. The wonderful network of the four polyphonic and polyrhythmic string parts with its subtle lights and shades keeps the attention of the interested score-reader up to the last bar. And yet—it is more than doubtful if any later generation will readily accept this work as a representative expression of loathing and the relief which accompanies the eclipse of Hitler in our minds. It is unfortunately written in an esoteric style which, however, is bound to develop curiosity value later on. Nevertheless, it is a perfect work of art, born into a world of artistic half-measures and compromises.

In his last work for large orchestra Béla Bartók tries to popularize certain features of his later style—rhythmic irregularities, polytonal clashes, free polyphonic combinations—and to circumvent the rigidities of the traditional symphony pattern by painting on a large loose canvas. An "Introduction" based on a motif of rising fourths—a little reminiscent of Schönberg's first *Kammersymphonie* op. 9—begins seriously and symphonically enough. In the fifth movement, the finale, which unites rondo features and intricate contrapuntal devices, this basic idea will crop up again to clinch the whole quasi-symphonic argument. The filling in the sandwich comprises some much lighter stuff. Tovey would have chuckled over the "Great Bassoon Joke" of the "Gioco delle coppie" which ends as the "Great Trumpet Joke", the trumpets playing the folklike first subject in parallel semitones as in the far-off days of *Petrouchka*. The "Elegy"—third movement—is full of those post-romantic Tsigane vagaries, rhapsodically expressed by woodwinds and harp, which once characterized Bartók's first, post-Lisztian style, and the delightfully irregular 5/8 rhythm of the "Interrupted Intermezzo"—fourth movement—recalls to memory the middle movements of the later string quartets—*in modo Bulgarese*—as well as Bartók's earlier Hungarian folklore, especially in the sentimental tune at bar 43. The Finale tries through contrapuntal tricks and a backcloth of vigorous rhythms to achieve a grand climax, but fails blatantly to do so and gives up finally with the despairing gesture of two alternative endings, printed consecutively at the end of the score. Intricacies of scoring, cadential vagaries of solo flutes, new tricks for harp, cannot obliterate the feeling of frustration creeping out of the pages of this strangely compromising work, in which sections of almost Dohnanyi-like romantic tonalism clash with the acerbities of polyrhythmic combinations in the manner of Bartók's late string quartets. It seems obvious that here Bartók for once tried to write popular stuff—"popular", at least, in the manner of his greatest Hungarian fellow artist, Kodály; and to adjust the exigencies of his style to his new American audience for whom this work was specially designed. His failure to do so proves once more that Bartók had to be true to himself to remain Bartók. His austere and uncompromising style of polyrhythmic patterns and heterophonic clashes of harmony, so relevantly evolved between the second and the sixth string quartet, does not suffer popularization. It could absorb melodic and rhythmic folklore and even the improvisatory manners of gipsy music, but not the urbanities of "well-behaved" modern Symphony. In failing to achieve this goal, Bartók remained faithful to his better self on the threshold of death, and faithful to a vanishing epoch which he represents with dignity and aloofness.

Both these works were composed for America by European exiles in their new American home. By their sheer existence and by the circumstances of their creation they bear witness to the fateful transformation which European music had to undergo under the influence of changing politics. A mere fourteen years ago both compositions would have been written in Central European capitals, if Schönberg's anti-Hitler *Ode* could have been written at all! The Jew Schönberg had to seek shelter in U.S.A. at the age of 60, while his younger Hungarian colleague was allowed to stay in his home country until the outbreak of war drove him into the same exile. His Concerto was commissioned then and there and performed under Koussevitzky with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on 1st December, 1944, in New York. Schönberg's *Ode*, in a transcription for string orchestra, was first performed by the Philharmonic Symphony Society in New York under the direction of Artur Rodzinski on 23rd November of the same year. The increasing importance of the U.S.A. as shelter for fugitive European artists is emphasized by these biographical facts.

Next, two compositions may fittingly be considered by indigenous Americans who in turn represent a new generation of creative American thought.

Walter Piston is no stranger to British audiences. His music has repeatedly been performed, especially by the B.B.C., which only recently presented a selection of his Stravinsky-inspired ballet *The Incredible Flutist*. The first Symphony, completed in 1937, first performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1938 and published at last in 1945, conveys a good idea of this composer's attainments. It is a formidable piece of workmanship, typical for the desire, prevalent in the late thirties, to recover something of the austere greatness of the symphonic tradition, but also exuding that feeling of barrenness and despair which characterized the artistic output of the "Munich" years. The Symphony is tonal with a vengeance. Two of its three movements violently assert C major tonality. The principal *Allegro* is a proper symphonic movement with three groups, a short and rather erratic development section, a cleverly extended recapitulation and a terse coda alluding to the ostinato of the Introduction. The balance of themes is well calculated and the constructive power with which they are developed is impressive. But here, as in the third movement—in which sonata and rondo characteristics alternate—the music, evolved out of highly promising themes, fails to convince because of its complete lack of melodic spontaneity. Everything is very cleverly set up, but cold as marble, and the garish C major chords in the brass at the very end fail to bring a real solution after all the artificial tension of the earlier movements. The middle movement begins unsymphonically enough with a solo for cor anglais. But no pastoral mood develops from this curiously amorphous enunciation. The rhapsodic cadenza for flute and the middle section, built upon a glassy 5/8 motif, remind one fleetingly of Bartók's less inspired moments. The obstinate basses and cunningly wrought but acidly dissonant counterpoint owe much to the middle Hindemith of the *Philharmonisches Konzert* and *Konzert für Orchester*, op. 38, just as the quality of some of the Symphony's principal themes recalls Schönberg's later technique of conjuring up themes fraught with countless possibilities of combination. The scoring is very effective and uncompromising, with unmixed colours hard against each other. What a pity that there seems so little humanity in a symphonic work of such seriousness of purpose and such relevancy of technique! It is only a ghostly shadow of the classical Symphony that Walter Piston has been able to conjure up.

William Schuman's Concerto for piano and small orchestra—completed in New Rochelle in 1942 and published in 1943—takes the ancient proposition of a contest between soloist and orchestra more seriously than Bartók, for whom this label had been no more than a convenient pretext to avoid the formal rigours of a symphony. Schuman gives the piano long stretches of formidable passage work, notably in the third movement in which a chromatic basso ostinato and later fugato show his natural aptitude for solving new pianistic problems. Unfortunately the thematic material is of the flimsiest kind and the development of its insignificant themes seems unduly stretched out with the help of "padding", jazzy rhythms, polytonal mixtures of parallel fifths and fourths and rhapsodic interjections by the orchestra. The treatment of the latter can only be guessed,

judging from a piano reduction. The shapelessness of the three movements and the lack of coherent expansion of the themes overshadow some good points, as, for instance, the sonorous and practical writing for the piano. The polytonal combinations of chords seem superimposed on a somewhat brittle material that would thrive better by more undisguised jazzlike treatment than the composer has thought fit to apply. H. F. R.

A. Khachaturian. *Toccata* (Piano solo). (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 2s.

S. Prokofiev. *Prelude*, op. 12, No. 7 (Piano solo). (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 1s. 6d.
Gavotte, op. 12, No. 2 (Piano solo). (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 1s. 6d.
Sonata No. 8, op. 84 (Piano solo). (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 9s.

It is very much to the credit of the Anglo-Soviet Press that it provides us fairly regularly with examples of the current output of Soviet composers. Works by well-known Russian musicians as well as by newcomers appear in their publication list, but we also get glimpses as to which older Russian composers are now popular in the U.S.S.R.—there are, for instance, works by Mussorgsky, early compositions by Miaskovsky and others.

Going through this music one wonders what the performing capacity of the general musical public in the Soviet Union is like at the present time. Some of the piano pieces in the collection of the Anglo-Soviet Press make very considerable demands on the player (and yet they are said to be widely played). If pieces such as Prokofiev's new Sonata are the Soviet amateur pianist's daily bread, I take off my hat to him. It is well known that there is an elaborate system of State patronage for musicians in that country. Students are paid for their studies, virtuosos are *personae gratissimae*, active amateur playing is strongly encouraged, and we know from experience that with the rising standard of professional activities that of amateur playing goes up accordingly (and *vice-versa*). In international competitions of young performers which take place every now and then, Soviet artists frequently come out top.

The present batch of piano works includes some older works by Khachaturian and Prokofiev. The former composer's *Toccata* (1932) is well known here. Rhythmic inconsistency and a peculiar harmonic idiom define this piece clearly as a forerunner of the composer's famous piano Concerto, and of his later choral and chamber music. There is a curious touch of what we commonly call the gipsy scale in his harmonic set-up—or rather of the scale system of the countries of the Near and Middle East in general, in particular the diminished and augmented intervals of South Caucasian folksongs. Another harmonic ingredient is the "cumulative fourth"—the piling-up of several natural fourths. This technique (frequently used by twentieth-century composers) makes the music assume a certain modernistic attitude without entirely breaking its "tonal" qualities. This is grateful music, not too hard to play but exciting and original. Its folklore character is interesting, in so far as it illustrates the Soviet Government's policy of fostering an independent national art among its numerous races and peoples, based on the tradition of popular music within each national unit.

Prokofiev's early *Prelude* (1913) and *Gavotte* (1908-10) need little introduction. Both have been heard over here fairly often, and through this handy new edition they are bound to become popular, especially as the price is reasonable. But the same composer's great piano *Sonata* No. 8 (op. 84) makes me sit up and wonder. In the international musical scene to-day Prokofiev is one of the front-rank composers. His music to *Alexander Nevsky* is perhaps the best film music ever written by any composer; his latest orchestral works are bursting with vitality, optimism and dramatic strength. Thematic clarity and his capacity to achieve whatever he wants by a bare minimum of means, his witty, easy way of dealing with key-relationships and the problems of tonality—these are some outstanding features of his music. Yet few of these are found in the present piano Sonata. Here are unimportant, average themes, harmonies which to me seem to be lacking direction; altogether there is an atmosphere of tiredness. It is the first disappointment

in my acquaintance with the works of Prokofiev. I particularly dislike the second movement (*Andante sognando*) which uses a curiously obvious waltz theme recalling both Schubert and Mahler when they are not at their best, with the difference that it is blurred by some dissonant harmonies. Some sections in the last movement are more successful, notably an *allegro ben marcato* which has the composer's old vigour and brilliance.

D. Shostakovich. *Six Children's Pieces* (Piano solo). (Anglo-Soviet Music Press.) 3s. 6d.

These are musical miniatures for tiny children. I find them a trifle mechanical. More interesting results could be achieved even in this very simple idiom. Writing for small children is so much an art of its own that it almost requires a composer specially devoted to this type of music, someone not too occupied with grown-ups. These pieces are helpful, though, as introductions to "modern" harmonic thinking and feeling. The test is, of course, whether the children like this kind of music.

Benjamin Britten. *Scottish Ballad* for two pianos and orchestra, op. 26. Arrangement for two pianos. (Boosey & Hawkes, Ltd.) 12s. 6d.

It has been a fascinating experience to watch the development of Britten as a composer from his early choral pieces (first announcing a brilliant talent) to his great symphonic and operatic works. The public have been most generous in showing the young composer their appreciation and their pride in what they recognize as one of the most original and imaginative British composers of recent times. From the point of view of the music itself this development has not been without its ups and downs. This prolific composer has written works coming near real greatness (such as *Ballad of Heroes*, *Sinfonia da Requiem*, the *Michelangelo Songs* and much in *Peter Grimes*, to mention only a few of them)—and also works which do not seem to enrich contemporary music a great deal. Is this, perhaps, because many of Britten's friends regard him with an admiration verging on sacred awe which prevents them from keeping an open critical mind? Some composers need knocking about every now and then, to prevent them becoming uncritical towards themselves. I do not know whether this is the case with Britten, but I am writing these lines just in case it is—I feel entitled to do so, counting myself among the composer's admirers. One does not do a composer a favour by proclaiming him indiscriminately.

I am afraid I find *Scottish Ballad* by no means up to the standard of Britten's best work, especially in the present arrangement. To begin with, there is only one short section with a recognizably "Scottish" element in it. The rest is so much dressed up in modernistic virtuoso figuration that there is little trace left of the folklore underlying the treatment. That may have been the composer's intention, yet it is somewhat disappointing to find so little fulfilled of what is promised in the title. Holst, Vaughan Williams, Bartók, Kodály and others have tried to present national folk music in a new light while always prominently displaying its essential qualities. They enhance its beauties—"this is how I, a twentieth-century individual, enjoy my folksong, these are its main features; here, feel with me its delicate contours, the perfect shape of its melodic lines". To Britten the folklore element becomes but an excuse for writing something, anything. The greater part of the work itself is noisy, coarse-fibred—true, I much prefer this "banging away" in the second half of the work to the self-pitying, ruminating misery of our continental contemporaries, yet I cannot call it really evolved art. However, most irritating to me is the harmonic idiom. Much of the harmony seems so casual, a feature still met with frequently, alas, among modern composers. There must be *direction* in the progress of harmonies; it is not enough to reduce the "tonal" effect of a chord, passage or melody just by adding distorting dissonant notes haphazardly. This is what Britten seems to have done in many places in this *Ballad*, so different from the harmonic directness and logic of other works of his. In present-day music the harmonic question remains the crux of the problem (at least in this type of semi-tonal or rather "pseudo-atonal" music). This problem is still difficult to solve. The harmonic life of a modern work does not spring ready-made from the composer's mind like Athene from the head of Zeus. It requires much responsible thought; yes, and daring.

Edmund Rubbra. *Improvisations on Virginal Pieces by Giles Farnaby*. Op. 50. (Universal Edition (London), Ltd.) Full score 25s.

Giles Farnaby is chiefly known to us from his contributions to the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, and as an inventor of melodies as well as master of characterization there are few to equal him.

Five of these pieces have inspired Mr. Rubbra to write "improvisations" of his own (Farnaby's *Conceit*, *His Dreame*, *His Humour*, *Loth to Depart*, *Tell me Daphne*). Themes by Couperin, Pergolesi, Tallis and other old composers have similarly served contemporary composers as backbones for orchestral fantasies.

Rubbra's work will make entertaining listening. Unlike some of the other works mentioned, it keeps fairly faithfully to the original melodies and maintains a sense of the old harmonic style. The orchestration is excellent throughout, it is colourful, clear and full of variety. Altogether there is ostensibly nothing wrong with this music. *But . . .*

Here is a word of warning regarding future attempts at reliving ancient history. They sometimes come off, but more often they don't. Already in this work one becomes suspicious whether, with all the able orchestral treatment, the pleasure in listening to it does not come to a considerably higher degree from Farnaby than from Rubbra. True, Mr. Rubbra has established a reputation as a symphonic composer of considerable importance. Perhaps he might well be able to afford, as a composer, such an excursion into the past just once. Yet I should not advise composers in general to imitate this example, perhaps to surprise us with large quantities of Monteverdi Fantasies, Improvisations on Themes by Ferrabosco or Schütz or Lully. There are literally thousands of original scores of truly great music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries waiting to be made available to the public to-day. We do not have to "do things to them" at all. They are strong enough in themselves not to need twentieth-century make-up. The nose of Apollo Belvedere in the face of a Rodin statue! I cannot see any reason why this "old" music should not be reproduced and performed just as it stands. Discovery and revival of this music as it is seem so much more important than improvisations and arrangements. On the other hand, if it is in the composer's mind to give himself, let him look around in this exciting, blossoming world; he will find plenty of impressions and experiences to "improvise" upon.

E. H. M.

E. J. Moeran. *Six Poems*. (Seumas O'Sullivan.) Voice and Piano. (J. Williams.) 4s.

These settings are agreeable and unpretentious, but are not particularly characteristic and hardly in the composer's happiest vein. One is left with the feeling that they represent a rather uncomfortable compromise between the "drawing-room" and "art" song—a little too harmonically sophisticated for the former, and not quite "developed" enough to be considered as a serious contribution to contemporary song-writing. The fact that all six songs are in slow tempo (the quickest is *Andantino*) may or may not be a drawback from the performing point of view, but the cycle should nevertheless be welcomed by singers on the lookout for something a little out of the ordinary. As their titles indicate, these are "genre" pieces, some of them with a definite "Irishy" flavour which singers can be relied upon to make the most of.

R. H. M.

Patrick Hadley. *The Hills*: a cantata for soprano, tenor, and bass soli, chorus, and orchestra. Vocal score. (Oxford University Press.) 6s. 6d.

A large choral work by the recently appointed professor of music in the University of Cambridge is both a welcome and a rare occurrence. Patrick Hadley is a slow composer, distilling his musical ideas over a long period, and constructing his very individual texture with infinite care and deliberation. The result of his process of composition is that no work by Hadley is ever merely fluent: each has a meaning intensely felt and expressed with exactitude. *The Hills* is, if such a thing is possible, even more personal in outlook than the previous pieces. In *La Belle Dame sans Merci* Hadley sought to re-express Keats in music, and certainly succeeded in underlining his words if not in

intensifying them. The "Symphonic Ballad", *The Trees so High*—well described by its title—is a more abstract work; true, the whole is haunted by the tragic folk-song from which the work takes its title. The first three orchestral movements are absolute, and only the solo and chorus in the finale bring in direct human associations. *Travellers* is a song of encouragement, dedicated "in gratitude and admiration to those who have been and are going forth from these walls [of Cambridge University] to travel on a hard road". The fourth work has the absurdly inadequate sub-title of "a cantata": actually it is a series of scenes revisited, incidents relived in the mind of a younger generation. The characters in the piece are dramatically alive: the prodigal son seeking his parents; the parents themselves; the wedding guests; and, most important, the hills where they lived. Those hills are as much a part of the story as Egdon Heath is a character in *The Woodlanders*; and much of the narrative is told us as in a dream, as a retrospect come newly alive. From the printed page, we observe that the dates of completion were: Prologue and "The Hills in Spring," October, 1943, Interlude, Christmas, 1943, the remainder, April, 1944. Yet, somehow, the work gives the impression of having been a good while longer in the composer's mind than a modest six months. For words and music are a single conception: both have grown out of the thought of "the hills", and both have been contrived by the composer to express a kind of pantheistic adoration for hills as hills. The landscape provides the incidents, the lines, the notes. The music is not a setting of the words: it would be nearer to the truth to say that the words were written to the music. The literary result is distinctly Whitmanesque. As we are directed in a composer's note that "the libretto is for singing only; it must therefore not be quoted in print apart from the music", it is unwise, and perhaps even unfair, to criticize its success as poetry. The work as a complete whole is highly poetical; and therefore one could have wished that to avoid certain obvious lapses in poetical style (like "Fall away, purling gill, swirl forth your flow" and the whole of page 34 of the vocal score, for example), the composer had asked an accomplished poet of technique and sympathy to go over the lines with an improving pen. I am entirely in favour of Hadley's deliberate use of nonsense words and syllables for the chorus when they are portraying the jollity of the wedding guests; but I am not wholly convinced that the actual syllables used are the best that a keen literary brain might have devised. Some of the phrases, for example, are no more than banal slang ("funny game, silly show, what a bore!"). In total, however, the wedding scene is riotously successful, as simple in effect as a folk-song, as elaborate in technical needs as Berlioz' *Le Bal*. So far as one can judge from the vocal score, *The Hills* is Hadley's finest accomplishment. It is closer knit than the symphonic ballad; it is packed with imaginative fantasy, controlled by fine artistic judgment; and the quality of the musical ideas is of rare beauty. I fancy that it is never going to be easy to find soloists, especially a soprano, capable of singing the very difficult parts Hadley has given them. Technique and poetic understanding do not often come together in the tribe of vocalists. The vocal score, however, is hardly as much as a black-and-white photograph of Hadley's painting. One can only guess at the elaboration of the figures, at the real effect of the climaxes, at the peace of the ending, and the solemnity of the opening. But even the vocal score can tell us that in *The Hills* we have one of the outstanding choral pieces of our day, a work of intense and original feeling, as well as first-class musical quality.

H. J. F.

Technical Section

IN view of the wide and steadily increasing repertoire of recorded music, and to introduce our readers to some of the more striking improvements which are now being made in the quality of the best reproducing apparatus, we propose to include within these covers reports on electrical gramophone equipment of outstanding performance, as and when opportunity offers. Radio receivers and accessories will not be reviewed as this ground is well covered by other journals: while acoustic gramophones are excluded because, with due respect to the music critic of *The Times*, the principle upon which they operate is as dead as the dodo, and no acoustic instrument, however pleasant it may sound, can begin to do justice to the wealth of detail latent in the best modern records (though it may and often does conceal the more vicious defects of the worst).

The Lexington Moving Coil Pick-Up. £6 14s. 6d., including tax. Input transformer, ratio 50:1, in Mu-metal screening box, £1 13s. 2d. Sapphires, tip radius 0.0015" or 0.0025". 15s. 3d. each. [A cheaper model is also available and also a plug-in head for use with automatic changers.] (Cooper Mfg. Co., 134 Wardour Street, London, W.1.)

This pick-up, of which we publish a photograph and a sectional diagram, is a triumph of precision engineering which has given a fine account of itself in a series of rigorous tests. The claim that it is built like a watch does not seem extravagant. The bearings are free without lateral play and the bare half-ounce pressure on the sapphire stylus has proved entirely adequate to ensure satisfactory tracking of the heaviest low-frequency recordings we could find (e.g. Schweitzer's record of the Bach D minor Toccata and Fugue: Columbia ROX 152).

As one would expect from a design of this type, the output is low—of the order of one millivolt—but the pick-up, used in conjunction with the special transformer, will provide good signal strength through a normal three-stage amplifier with bass correction of 6 dB per octave. The manufacturers offer a special pre-amplifier, with or without bass correction, for use where these conditions are not fulfilled.

Careful thought has been given to the design of the sapphire stylus and more particularly to its insertion and ejection. Two standard tip radii are offered, of one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half thousandths of an inch: the former specially designed to give the best possible results from records of wide frequency range, while the larger radius is said to be more suitable for discs which make less ambitious claims to high fidelity. It is self-evident that the smaller tip radius will give a better account of the higher frequencies and one might suppose that it would produce a more aggressive and penetrating brand of "surface noise"; but we have not found this to be the case and confidently recommend the 0.0015" sapphire as the better general purpose stylus.

Mr. Cooper is of the opinion that the obvious means of holding a reproducing stylus is by means of a Morse taper—this is the engineer's standpoint: he has adopted this method in the Lexington pick-up and we believe he has proved his contention. Readers may know that with needles of semi-permanent character it is most desirable that, however often they are removed and re-inserted, they should always present the same surface to the record groove. There is one way in which this can be insured—by providing a "flat" in the socket and a corresponding "flat" on the stylus shaft; someone had to pioneer this simple expedient and Mr. Cooper has done it. In addition the means of insertion and ejection is all but foolproof and the method of fixing the pick-up to the motor board almost precludes any tracking error with motors of standard pattern.

Finally we must postulate what we regard as the fundamental requirement of any high-grade pick-up—that it should provide a clean response from the record over a wide range of frequencies without any trace of buzz or rattle. This the Lexington does and therefore in our view fully justifies what may at first appear rather a high price.

The Decola: an electric gramophone with provision for radio unit which is not yet available. 165 guineas plus £43 6s. 3d. tax. (Decca Record Co. Ltd., 1-3 Brixton Road, London, S.W.9.)

We have been very happy to take advantage of the Decca Company's generous offer to make one of these instruments available to us for prolonged test under domestic conditions.

First of all, a brief description of the instrument: it consists of a class A amplifier incorporating four push-pull stages of which the first three employ L63 valves leading to a final PX25 stage. The power pack is separate, while the motor is a Garrard RC60/D16 unit incorporating an ingenious and efficient record-changer and a light-weight moving iron pick-up of Decca design with sapphire stylus. The whole of this equipment is housed above the arrows in the accompanying photograph, while immediately below them are to be found three 12" speakers arranged as shown in our sectional diagram. Under the speakers there is a spacious record cabinet.

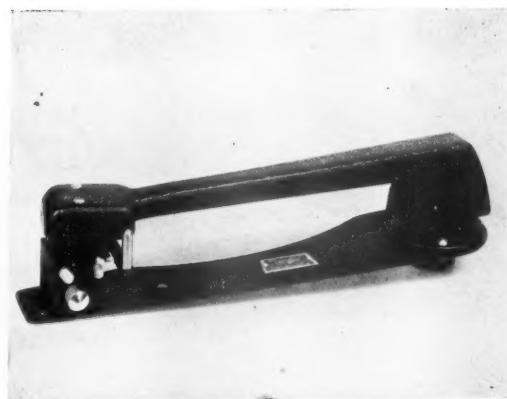
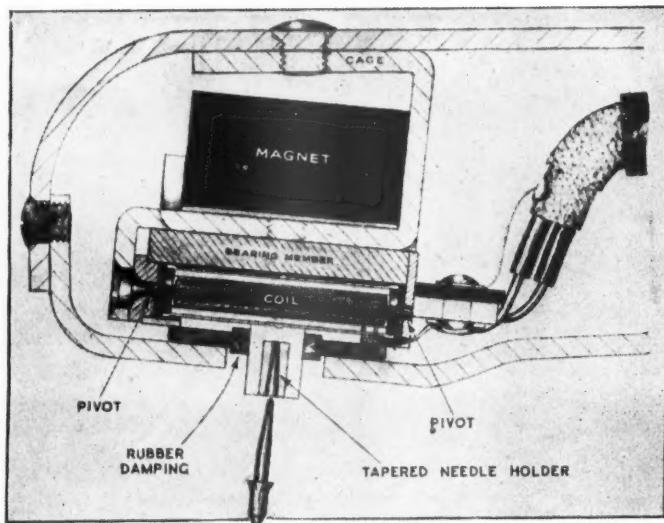
The design of the whole is most ingenious. In marked contrast to every radio set and radiogram which came in for overhaul while the writer was working as a radio engineer, the Decola has been put together with every consideration for ease of servicing. The removal of two screws, a plug and four control handles enables one to reach the whole of the electrical installation, any part of which is immediately removable for inspection and, if necessary, replacement. The cabinet, a very handsome piece of furniture, is available in a combination of maple, Indian laurel and sycamore: in figured walnut, and mahogany or oak. The dimensions are 40" high, 38" wide and 16" deep.

Readers may feel that to be asked something over £200 for an electric gramophone is beyond the bounds of reason. If you are one of these, first bear in mind the depreciation of the pound and then be assured that no reproducing instrument comparable to the Decola has ever yet come from the factory of any British radio or gramophone concern. Operation of the instrument is practically foolproof, while it will produce more than the six watts claimed by the makers before any harmonic distortion becomes perceptible (and what one cannot hear one does not need to worry about).

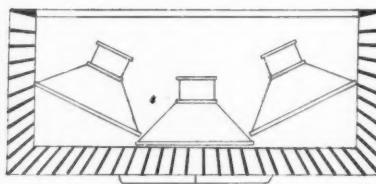
At no time in the past have we come across any factory-built gramophone which could not be made to sound unpleasant by legitimate means. By this we exclude deliberate overloading, or any other form of flagrant misuse. Provided you do not overload the Decola, and your ears would be singing from sheer volume long before, there is no electrically recorded disc in good condition which it will not reproduce better than any of its factory-made competitors (we emphasize "factory-made" because certain laboratory equipment attains a higher degree of fidelity and this we expressly exclude). The pick-up tracks well, transient reproduction is good and the distribution of sound, as shown in our sectional diagram is excellent.

The four control handles referred to above are (a) the radio-gram switch, (b) volume control, (c) independent bass, and (d) treble controls. The two latter each have three numbered positions, of which the highest numeral indicates the maximum response. For normal use we find that it is best to set both controls at "2", but there are modern records which sound best with a maximum treble setting (unless you like a "nice mellow tone" in which case the Decola will not appeal to you at all), while some old discs can be made to sound quite impressive by employing maximum bass, e.g. Zanelli's magnificent version of the Entrance of Otello (His Master's Voice DB 1439). This should be sufficient to show that although the Decola is simple to operate, some trouble must be taken if you want to get the best results from all types of record. The three controls used in combination provide a very flexible output which will cope with almost any disc in good condition; but the Decola cannot be made to camouflage worn records or to hide distortion and blast effect if these have been cut into the wax in the first instance.

We have no hesitation in describing the Decola as a fine achievement of British radio engineering; properly handled it is capable of magnificent performance. Having made our admiration quite clear, we may perhaps add two suggestions for possible improvement which we think and hope are practicable. First that we should prefer continuously



THE LEXINGTON PICK-UP



THE DECOLA

variable treble and bass controls in the interest of even greater flexibility; and second, if a lock is to be fitted on the cabinet, would it not serve a better purpose in safeguarding the controls and auto-changer rather than the record cupboard?

G. N. S.

Gramophone Records

Leoncavallo: Pagliacci, Prologue.

Paolo Silveri.

Columbia DX 1304. 4s.

Puccini: La Bohème, "Si mi chiamano Mimi", and*

Verdi: La Traviata, "Addio del passato".

Margherita Carosio.

His Master's Voice DB 6343. 6s.

Verdi: Rigoletto, "Questa o quella", and

"La Donna e mobile".

Luigi Infantino.

Columbia DB 2269. 3s. 3d.

All with the Covent Garden Opera Orchestra, c. Franco Patane.

These three souvenirs of the C.M.F. San Carlo Company's visit to Covent Garden all suffer to some extent from an unpleasant echo effect, particularly on climaxes, and the recording of the *Pagliacci* Prologue overemphasizes the "high-spots", giving an impression of roughness that may mislead listeners who have not heard Silveri at first hand. But although this disc does not display his full powers it is well worth a hearing. Carosio's record provides two object lessons in the handling of *recitative*, at the beginning of the Verdi and the end of the Puccini. This great artist overcomes the limitations of the recording process to a remarkable degree and we recommend her record very strongly for this reason. Infantino sounds neither better nor worse than he did in the opera house. The orchestral playing is competent in all cases.

Handel: Messiah.

Isobel Baillie; Gladys Ripley; James Johnston and Norman Walker with the Huddersfield Choral Society and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Malcolm Sargent.

Columbia DX 1283-1301. 76s.

We should have welcomed a first-class, new, complete recording of *Messiah*, but unfortunately this is neither first-class nor complete. These nineteen double-sided records represent a great many hours of work and bear witness to the organising efficiency of those concerned, so that it is the more unfortunate to have to tabulate so many reservations.

Of the soloists Gladys Ripley and Norman Walker are the most impressive; Isobel Baillie does not seem at her best, while James Johnston is decidedly weak. The choral singing is solid, reliable and steady in tone, yet entirely lacking in delicacy or any but the most obvious contrasts of light and shade. Finally the orchestral playing: let us be charitable and call it undistinguished; time and again through this set ornamental string detail is imperfectly articulated or completely lost.

With all its shortcomings this version of *Messiah* is fully representative of the type of performance we have heard many times in Yorkshire and Lancashire—solid and workmanlike, without ever scaling the heights and with certain basic weaknesses. In fact it sounds like a matter of routine.

As an export article it will give enthusiasts abroad a very fair idea of the usual run of *Messiahs* to be heard in the industrial North. We feel that it would have been far

* Strongly recommended.

better to record an unusual performance which might have set a standard for others to aim at.

The quality of the recording as such is only fair.

Hely-Hutchinson: More Ruthless Rhymes for Heartless Homes.

Olive Groves, George Baker and small orch. c. Hely-Hutchinson.

His Master's Voice C 3531-32. 8s.

These are a sequel to the set reviewed on p. 68 of our last volume. Unfortunately the same criticism we made then still holds good. The recording is bad, being plummy and indistinct—two faults to be avoided at all costs when words have to be heard, as these must.

Beethoven: Quartet in F, Op. 18, No. 1.

Busch Quartet.

His Master's Voice DB 6300-02. 18s.

*Bartók: Quartet No. 5.**

Hungarian Quartet.

His Master's Voice C 3511-14. 16s.

*Frankel: Sonata for violin, Op. 13.**

Max Rostal.

Decca K 1178-79. 8s.

The Beethoven set which *The Times* (9 January) acclaims as a new issue, is in fact a re-release of an oldish recording about which there is nothing new to say here. The Bartók and Frankel works are very welcome additions to the gramophone repertoire, the more so because the performance and recording are in each case superb.

Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on a theme of Tallis.

Hallé Orchestra, c. Barbirolli.

His Master's Voice C 3507-08. 8s.

The fine records made by the B.B.C. Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult remain the standard. This new version costs less and sounds satisfactory until you make the comparison.

*Dvořák: Cello Concerto, Op. 104.**

Maurice Gendron with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Rankl.

Decca K 1437-41. 20s.

It is always a great pleasure to be able to recommend a set of records without reservation, confident that the discerning listener runs no risk of being disappointed. Here we have Decca recording technique at its best, a brilliant and finely drawn reading of the solo part by Maurice Gendron and an orchestral accompaniment which fulfils the two major requirements for complete success—careful balance of parts and absolute precision. While the niceties of recording remain as incalculable as they are at present, it is unreasonable to expect this very high quality to be maintained in all future issues. Meanwhile we must acclaim a fine achievement which we hope the Decca Company will regard as a standard for the future.

Readers may be reminded that none of these new wide-range recordings will give full evidence of their exceptional "depth" except on a modern high-grade electrical reproducer.

*Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85.**

Casals with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Boult.

His Master's Voice DB 6338-40: DBS 6341. 21s.

The cello Concerto was Elgar's last large scale work and in many ways his greatest. Its form is as concise as its matter is pungent. When writing, eighteen months ago, of

* Strongly recommended.

a performance given by Casals in the Albert Hall we hoped he would record this music which we believe he plays with greater intensity than anyone else.

These records are impossible to describe; they must be heard. There is an uncanny realism about the whole re-creation which even includes several examples of Casals' famous chromatic grunt. The technical balance of the recording—a factor in which nearly all the discs of the Philharmonia orchestra fail—is all that can be desired; the climaxes are clean, hard and undistorted, while the lightest *ppp* is still audible, yet not too loud. Indeed the effect of "contrast expansion" has almost been achieved without the complication of incorporating any such device in the reproducer.

Casals' playing is what one has come to expect and that of the B.B.C. Orchestra is finer and more subtle than we have often heard.

This must rank as the greatest achievement in the British gramophone world during 1946.

Walton: Concerto for Viola and Orchestra.

William Primrose with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walton.

His Master's Voice DB 6309-11. 18s.

This performance is very slick, with all the emphasis on speed and polish. Once again the Philharmonia Orchestra sound larger than life. Decca recorded this work some years ago (X 199-201) with Frederick Riddle and the London Symphony Orchestra also under the composer's direction. We recommend a hearing of both versions.

Rossini: Overture, La Gazza Ladra.

N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Toscanini.

His Master's Voice DB 6342. 6s.

Strauss: Don Juan, Op. 20.

National Symphony Orchestra, c. Sidney Beer.

Decca K 1347-48. 8s.

It is impossible to recommend either of these. The Rossini blasts and distorts on climaxes, while the percussion is ridiculously over-emphasized. There also appears to be an internal difference of opinion as to tempo in the coda. The Strauss is given tolerably good recording, but the performance has nothing of insight or imagination to lend it distinction.

Brahms: Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 90.

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca K 1448-52. 20s.

Boston Symphony Orchestra, c. Koussevitzky.

His Master's Voice DB 6276-79. 24s.

Mengelberg's old Columbia set, made with the Concertgebouw orchestra, remains the best performance of Brahms' third Symphony on wax; but the recording process of those days will not compare with modern practice.

To make a choice between these new versions is not easy. The Decca is very well recorded, but the interpretation lacks both fire and subtlety. Koussevitzky's reading brings out the fiery and tempestuous elements to perfection but the recording is cursed with the characteristic American vices—raucous shallow tone and pronounced deficiency of bass. Nevertheless, a good modern reproducer with variable treble and bass response can cover up the worst of the trouble.

Beethoven: Egmont Overture.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Galliera.

Columbia DX 1273. 4s.

It is difficult to imagine a better performance than this; hard driven, dramatic, clear in detail, yet subtle where subtlety is called for. Alceo Galliera (like Erich Leinsdorf)

could do a fine job training one of our orchestras up to continental standards (e.g. that of the Concertgebouw).

But here our eulogy ceases. The recording as such is most disappointing: coarse, over-amplified and difficult to reproduce. Once again we get the impression that the orchestra was not really large enough for the work and no amount of amplification will make a small orchestra sound like a large one.

Haydn: Symphony No. 104 in D ("The London").

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Dobrowen.

His Master's Voice C 3515-17. 12s.

Dobrowen's careful performance does not supersede Beecham's fine version of the same work (Columbia LX 856-8). The new set has more vigour but correspondingly less finesse. The recording seems larger than life.

Mahler: Symphony No. 4 in G major.

The New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra with Desi Halban (soprano),

c. Bruno Walter.

Columbia LX (Auto) 8522-8527. 36s.

Bruno Walter has already recorded Mahler's ninth Symphony, *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Adagietto from the fifth. Mitropoulos has recorded the first and Ormandy the second Symphony, each with the Minneapolis Orchestra (the first has not yet been released in England).

Apart from the latter, which we have not heard, none of the other records are in the highest class from the technical point of view, though the single movement from the fifth is quite the best. These new records of the fourth are unfortunately little, if any better, and it seems that the bogey of inadequate recording is to continue to obstruct the appreciation of Mahler's music which makes slow enough progress in this country without unnecessary handicaps of this character.

The horns seem to have presented an insuperable problem. We have tried these records on three instruments (two new and one late pre-war), none of which could cover or eliminate the periodic aggressive "blast" effect.

The performance, as one would expect, has been a fine one—very similar in essentials to that given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Walter three months ago.

G. N. S.

Berlioz: Reverie and Caprice, Op. 8.

Szigeti and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Constant Lambert.

Columbia LX 946. 6s.

For Berlioz, this is a miniature amongst orchestral works. Loose-jointed and rhapsodic it is without argument; as a concerto movement it is a failure because the composer has not solved the difficulty of consorting a solo instrument with a large orchestra in a structureless essay. Had the element of form been there, had bones been present to support the fleshy orchestration, the solo part could have provided meaning as well as lush beauty to the very wonderful rhapsodic passages written for it. All the same, a recording of the work is welcome; Berlioz is always exciting, perhaps most exciting, when he is trying to pull something off that obviously is not going to work. As in so many other of his orchestral movements, time and again the lovely and the unexpected passage rise out of the welter of tone so that the total effect is that of small, but precious diamonds set in a large and too ornate ornament. Many such passages depend upon the soloist, and Szigeti makes the best of them with some of the finest playing heard on records these many months. (I hope he is not responsible for the unscored twang on an open G string in a quiet moment towards the end of side one.) The recording is excellent and Berlioz lovers are recommended to buy this issue.

J. B.

EDWARD ELGAR

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